

Flowercraft Garden Center

San Francisco's #1 Nursery

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HOME

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GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

Tips for Fall Gardening

1. This is a perfect time to repair thin or bare spots in your lawn, or start a new lawn, with our area-adapted seed. Get this done now and it will fill in nicely before winter comes.

2. Like a certain tree or shrub, but don't know what it is? Simply bring in some of its leaves (a picture of it usually proves helpful also) — we'll identify it for you and help determine if it is a good candidate for your yard.

3. Plant spring-blooming wildflower seeds in October and you'll have larger plants with more flowers in the spring.



BULBS: A High Yield Investment

Seasoned gardeners know the thrill of choosing silky, sophisticated **tulips**; sunny, saucy **daffodils**; fragrant, frilly **hyacinths**; plus radiant and resplendent **ranunculus**! It's true that they don't look amazing yet, but come late winter and early spring your yard will be transformed into an enchanting showplace. If you've never planted bulbs before, now is the time to catch the excitement!

By mid-September, we will have a wide assortment of TOP QUALITY bulbs, corms, and tuberous roots (to name a few). Selection is always best for those who come in early and stock up for planting later.

If you want a continuous show of blooms, once we're into October start planting at weekly intervals for several weeks, or vary the planting depth just slightly. By doing this and choosing bulbs that bloom early, mid, and late season, you can look forward to a long beautiful season. Wow! Pick up some *Greenall Soil Booster* and *EB Stone Organics Bulb Food* to ensure top results.



Fall is PERFECT for Planting!

As the weather starts to cool down, it becomes a perfect time to plant trees, shrubs, groundcovers, flowers, and lawns. *Here's why:*



Plants love the daily warm air and soil with milder nighttimes.

Establishment period is optimized for excellent root development.

Rains will soon take over and water for you.

Fall temperatures are less stressful for transplants.

Even gardeners benefit from being outside during the milder weather.

Colorize your world through the lackluster winter months.

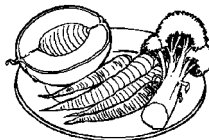
Transplant in the fall and plants will be much larger next spring.

Don't miss out on this perfect opportunity!

Economical Fall Vegetables

Want to eat healthier and reduce your grocery bills? Plant a fall vegetable garden! **Broccoli, carrots, green bunching onions, leaf lettuce, spinach, edible pod peas,** and **Swiss chard** all make the list for "top 15 vegetables in economic value." These results are based on pounds produced per square foot, the value of the crop, and the length of time in the garden.

These vegetables may have missed the top 15, but they're still good for your health and should be included in your fall garden: **Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and cabbage.** You can plant seeds or our seedlings now.



Need more good news? The flavor of fall-planted carrots is actually better! Why? It's those higher daytime temperatures combined with cooler nights. Studies conclude carrots are able to rest at night instead of burning the sugar they photosynthesized during the day, resulting in *more sweetness and flavor!*

Happy Re-Potted Houseplants

Do your houseplants look wilted, drab, or unhappy? They may need a little attention from you. That fern, philodendron, or other houseplant you bought last spring may be overdue for a larger container.

Here's how you can tell: inspect your houseplants to see if they are rootbound by carefully slipping it out of its container. If you find a white mass circling around the outside of the rootball, it's time to re-pot! We have a wide assortment of colors and styles to fit your personal tastes, so come in and have fun browsing.

Once you have found a container that is 2 inches wider in diameter than the one you are replacing, pull the plant out and straighten the circling roots, snip off the extra long ones with sharp scissors, and then place your plant into its new home. Fill in with our *Black Gold Potting Soil*. Your plant will thank you with greener leaves, and better blooming.



Be Green: Compost!

Composting your garden and household debris is an easy project the whole family can participate in and results in free rich garden soil amendments, smaller landfills, and water conservation! Here are some tips to help Mother Nature turn your waste into "gardener's gold" faster:

👉 **Start your compost pile** by alternating layers of brown dry matter (leaves, grasses, hay or straw, chopped up woody stems) with moist fresh matter (lawn & green garden clippings, dead flowers, tea leaves, coffee grounds, other food waste).

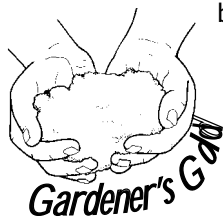
👉 **Do not add:** greasy foods, meat, bones, kitty litter, animal droppings, noxious weeds or diseased plants. Chop up woody material into smaller pieces with pruning shears or a shredder.

👉 **Size:** Ideally, your mound should have a base about 4' wide (to generate heat), but no higher than 5' tall (to allow oxygen to get to the bottom of the pile, and easier turning).

👉 **Aerate:** To accelerate the decomposition process, turn your pile every 7 days. Use a shovel or pitchfork.

👉 **Moisture content is important!** Piles too dry or wet won't heat up and decompose. Your pile needs to be damp, but not water-logged. For these reasons, cover your pile during heavy rains, and add water during hot spells.

NOTE: You can also add nitrogen fertilizer or manure to help speed decomposition.



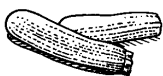
Identifying Garden Microclimates

Why is it that just down the street, a neighbor's shrub flowers profusely while the same plant languishes unadorned in your yard? It may be because of your landscape's particular microclimates (small climate pockets that are seasonally colder, warmer, or windier than the rest of your yard or neighborhood).

Microclimates are caused by differences in light exposure, air currents, buildings and walls, trees and hedges, varied topography, and moisture. Fall is a good time to begin mapping your yard's microclimates in order to get the most from your garden. Important factors include: 1) placement of your home and N-E-S-W exposure 2) areas which receive full sun, partial sun/shade or full shade; 3) high and low spots; 4) wind flow patterns (is it a cold or dry wind?); and 5) areas where the soil is wetter or dryer.

If you have plants that are not thriving, bring in your notes and we'll be happy to help you select replacement plants that will flourish. Next month we'll discuss how you can modify your microclimates.

Creamy Pasta with Garden Vegetables



8 oz medium shell pasta
1 Tbs olive oil
salt and pepper
1 lb zucchini & crook neck squash

1 large clove garlic, minced
7 1/2 oz goat cheese, crumbled
2 tomatoes
2 or 3 sprigs basil



Cook the pasta (you can also use fusilli, penne, rotini or a medley) according to package directions. Reserve 1 cup of the cooking water, drain pasta, and return it to the pot. Stir into reserved water: 7 oz of crumbled goat cheese, 3/4 tsp salt, and 1/4 tsp pepper. Stir until creamy and then gently mix with pasta.

Slice squash into thin medallions. Heat the oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add squash medley, 1/2 tsp salt, and 1/4 tsp pepper and cook, stirring, until the squash is tender-crisp and any liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes.

Cut tomatoes into chunks (save liquid to add), mince garlic, and julienne 1-2 sprigs basil—add all to squash, cook 5 minutes more (season to taste).

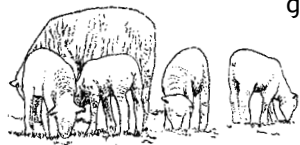
Top pasta with garden vegetables, garnish with basil and crumbled cheese and serve. For a robust meal, add cooked chicken cubes. Serves 4.



Trained Sheep Eat Only Weeds

University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) researchers have found an herbicide-free way to keep weeds from robbing valuable water and nutrients from vineyards—let sheep graze on them! So good so far, but as you may have already guessed, these herbivores also enjoy eating grape shoots and leaves...

UCCE researchers solved this problem by allowing young sheep to eat as many grape leaves as they wanted and then causing mild stomach aches with two small doses of lithium chloride (well below toxic levels and therefore harmless). Nine months after the field study began, 40 range-raised lambs continued to happily forage on the weeds while avoiding the grape leaves. Hmmm, natural weed control with a free fertilizer bonus! Sounds like a winner!



New: Nature-Deficit Disorder



The movement "leave no child inside," is gaining momentum both nationally and internationally. Interest was initially sparked by Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (2005) where he links issues such as childhood obesity, depression, stress, and attention disorders with a lack of connection with the outdoors. Louv coined the term *nature-deficit disorder* to describe the cumulative effect of our children's withdrawal and increasing alienation from the natural world as more time is spent inside than out.

Rickets, a 19th century bone-softening disease, is resurging, due in part to reduced sun exposure and outdoor exercise. Other studies show that children who do not play in the dirt miss out on earth's natural inoculation, resulting in weakened immune systems.

According to Louv, the antidote is simple (and healthy!). Provide kids with early and ongoing opportunities to interact with the greater outdoors in a variety of ways, and their nature play will reduce symptoms of ADHD, increase creativity, improve cognitive skills, and contribute to a sense of well-being and belonging. When playing (or even working) in the garden with your children, keep in mind that temperament, age, and gender will color and influence the quality of their interaction, so match activities accordingly and help stamp out unhealthy nature-deficit disorder!

