

Garden Clippings

Orange County Independent Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 17 Number 4

April 2011

March Meeting

Saturday, April 2, 2011

At our new location:

Rancho Santiago Community College Rm. 107
2323 North Broadway, Santa Ana, CA 92706

Schedule

8:15 – 9:00 a.m.	Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 – 9:45 a.m.	Business Meeting
9:45 - 10:00 a.m.	Plants 'n Things
10:00– 11:00 a.m.	Graduation!
11:00	Clean-up

In honor of our graduates, OCIMG will supply a main dish and dessert. We are asking all members (**NOT** our graduates!) to bring side dishes. Also, please bring along any items you wish to contribute to our Plants 'n Things raffle and any gardening catalogs or magazines you'd like to share. **Graduates: please arrive by 8:45am.**



Program: Graduation!

Our class of graduates will be the stars of our meeting. Robert Shaw has done an outstanding job with the class and has provided the students

with many different learning opportunities, including hands-on volunteer work. Some of the students have already completed their fifty hours of volunteer time.

Congratulations to every student! Many have been commended for their work on creating a garden at St. Joseph Episcopal Church in Buena Park as part of their volunteer hours. We look forward to meeting you in person, having you become active members, and shaking your hand.

Board Meeting: follows general meeting.

Gardening Events

Fullerton Arboretum. Pre-register for all classes by calling 657/278-3407

Sat, April 2: "African Violet Show and Sale"
10am-4pm.

Hundreds of African violets for sale. Arrive EARLY—they sell out quickly!

Sat-Sun, April 16-17: "Green Scene". 9am – 4pm \$6.00/members free

Celebrating California Native Plant Week and Earth week, the event features eco-garden design, specialty plants and home gardening elements.

Fullerton College Horticulture Dept., 321 E. Chapman, Fullerton 92832, 714-992-7135.
Website: <http://horticulture.fullcoll.edu>

Sat. – Sun. April 30 – May 1 and Sat. May 7:
"Annual Spring Sale". Apr. 30, 9am – 4pm,
May 1, noon – 3pm, May 7, 10am – 3pm

Their biggest sale of the year, with drought tolerant, tomatoes and peppers, succulents and perennials.

Back to Natives. Email:

info@backtonatives.org. To register or for more information, call Parks and Recreation at 714/647-5307.

Thurs. April 7 - June 23: "Habitat Restoration Training Program" . 9am – 2pm. Santiago Park Nature Center in Santa Ana. \$60

This program is for those interested in the restoration and conservation of Orange County wild lands. Some field labs are held throughout the Cleveland National Forest, Trabuco Ranger District. A \$20 materials fee is due at the second class.

Leaves from the President



Today is the first day of spring! Unfortunately, it is raining, but at least spring has sprung. I don't know about the rest of you, but I have spring fever and am dying to get out there and plant in the garden. I feel so restless that even weeding sounds good. That feeling won't last long.

We are also getting ready for our new class graduation. Let's have a good turnout at the April meeting and welcome all the new graduates to our group. Thanks in advance to everyone who is helping out with the graduation ceremony. See you in April.

Jill O'Neill, President
Orange County Independent Master Gardeners

Green Scene Volunteers Needed!

Green Scene at the Fullerton Arboretum is April 16 & 17 and volunteers are needed to staff our table. Please contact Anne Porter if you'd like to help. Setup for Green Scene is Friday from 8am – 4pm; exhibits are open 10am – 4pm that weekend with a member only preview from 9 – 10am on Saturday. Great opportunity for volunteer hours and then you can enjoy the event on your own!

Reminder for June Meeting

We will be holding our annual plant exchange in June. Now is the time to start seedlings or plant cuttings so they will be ready. It's a fun event and a great way to enhance your garden. I'm hoping that someone will be bringing sweet basil seedlings again. I have a great Pesto recipe!

☎ Contacts

Jill O'Neill, *President*
Diane Wilkinson, *Treasurer*
Anne Porter, *1st^d Vice Pres*
Robert Shaw, *2nd Vice Pres.*
Fred Snyder, *Plant Clinic*
Jill Patterson, *Newsletter Editor*

Submit articles by the 10th of each month via:

e-mail

or snail mail:

Jean Rice, *Vol. Hours*

Website: [http:// www.ocmastergardeners.org](http://www.ocmastergardeners.org)

OATS Shoes is launching a line of fully compostable sneakers

Submitted by Scott Carroll

People may joke about their dirty old sneakers turning into science projects or mini ecosystems, but once OAT Shoes' compostable sneakers become commercially available within the next several weeks ... let's just say, those same people may no longer be joking when they make those kind of statements. Made using hemp, cork, bio-cotton, certified biodegradable plastics, chlorine-free bleach and other nontoxic materials, the shoes are designed to completely break down when buried in the ground – the first batch will even come with seeds in their tongues, so that wildflowers will sprout up in commemoration of users' planted, expired kicks.

After a reported two years of research and development, the launch of their Virgin Collection of sneakers is now imminent. They have already won second prize at last month's Green Fashion Awards in Amsterdam. **Read more about it at:**

<http://www.gizmag.com/compostable-sneakers-biodegrade-in-soil/17954/>

Why Won't My Violet Bloom?

Part 2

By Joyce Stock

From the AVSA.org Web Site, FAQ

A Few Other Possibilities



Along with preferring the soil to be loose and airy, violets like to be in small pots. Generally, the pots should be four inches deep

(or less) and only one-third the size of the leaf span. If your violet is twelve inches across, it should be growing in a pot that is four inches in diameter and four inches deep. When well-developed roots find the walls of their pot, they will often begin heavy flowering. Dry air can cause violet buds to dry off before ever becoming visible to the naked eye. Be sure that there is some humidity around the plant, and avoid drafts from heating or air conditioning. Humidity can be provided with a small open dish of water placed next to the pot. Uneven watering may cause buds to dry off prematurely. Try to keep soil evenly moist all of the time. Avoid allowing your violet to become so dry that leaves wilt, but also avoid allowing your plant to stand in water for more than one-half hour (to avert crown rot problems). Be sure that there is only one crown of leaves growing in the pot. Sometimes violets will form suckers, resulting in multiple crowns or centers of growth. These suckers should be removed into their own pot or destroyed, so that a single crown is left. Most violets do not bloom well when crowded in a pot.

A Silly Tip

Occasionally a grower is doing everything well, and a violet will still stubbornly remain out of bloom while developing beautiful leaves. Botanists would say that it is in a vegetative mode. In order to switch it to a fruiting

(flowering) mode, the plant needs a gentle threat that will trigger a "survival of the species" response. Squeezing the sides of the pot or gently thumping the pot on the table surface will disturb roots enough to trigger a panic response, often causing the violet to begin setting flowers. It sounds silly, but there is good science to support this action.

GMO Alfalfa is Officially Approved

Sent in by Janet Meade

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced its approval of "unrestricted planting" of genetically modified alfalfa sold by Monsanto, [according to *The Atlantic*](#). So what does that have to do with organic milk?

Cows eat more alfalfa hay than anything else, and as a crop, alfalfa is what *The Atlantic* calls "notoriously promiscuous." Bees and other insects can spread alfalfa pollen for up to five miles, meaning it's only a matter of time before the unrestricted GMO alfalfa cross-pollinates with non-GMO varieties.

It makes for a strange conundrum: The USDA's own regulations prohibit the use of genetically modified organisms in certified-organic products, yet by allowing such a fast-and-loose crop to be planted anywhere, the department is virtually guaranteeing that cows used to make organic dairy products will end up eating some mutant strain of GMO alfalfa.

What choice those irate consumers have, however, remains something of a mystery. Almost 250,000 of them submitted comments to the USDA asking the agency to prohibit the use of GMO alfalfa, which the department appears essentially to have ignored.

Read more:

<http://www.slashfood.com/2011/01/31/gmo-alfalfa-is-officially-approved/#ixzz1HeK4Q06M>

Editor's note: Monsanto's GMO potatoes were detailed in Michael Pollan's book *The Botany of Desire*. Highly recommended reading.