

Garden Clippings

Orange County Independent Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 23 Number 2

February 2017

February Meeting Saturday, February 4, 2017

Patriot Hall
735 S. Brea Blvd.
Brea, CA 92821

Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 – 9:30 a.m. Business Meeting
9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Enrichment Program
10:30– 10:45 a.m. Plants 'N Things
10:45 a.m. – noon Fertilizers

Members with last names starting with **R-Z**, please bring a breakfast snack. Other members are also welcome to bring goodies. 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.

Enrichment Program: Soils and Fertilizers with Gisele Schoniger of Kellogg

This is a combined meeting with our new students that will provide a review for us. Ms. Schoniger is an organic gardening educator and speaker who has provided ideas and solutions for greener living for over 34 years.

Last month's meeting

Our speaker, Nancy Bird, mentioned a BLM brochure which gives details on the process and locations for finding rocks on BLM land.

The website link is:

https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/uploads/Programs_EnergyMinerals_MiningMinerals_About_Nevada_HowToObtainMineralMaterials.pdf.

Anyone interested in a field trip to collect garden rocks?

Gardening Events

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

Sat. Feb. 25: "Designing Native Plants or Drought-tolerant Gardens", 10am – 12pm. \$30/members; \$35/non-members.

Learn how to design your garden by matching native plants that will bloom in succession.

Roger's Gardens, 2301 San Joaquin Hills Rd., Corona Del Mar, CA 92625, tel.949/640-5800

Sat. Feb. 11: "Small Space Gardening with Dalia Brunner", 9 - 10am. Free.

Learn tips on planting annuals, perennials and vegetables in small planting areas, like planters, raised beds and containers.

Sat. Feb. 18: "Tomato Gardening with Steve Goto", 10:00 am. Free.

Hear proper soil preparation using organic soil amendments, compost and worm castings for your garden, raised beds and containers.

Armstrong Nurseries: Free classes are provided at most locations. Feb. 11 is an orchid class and Feb. 18 is a beginning gardening class, both at 9am. Website is:

<http://www.armstronggarden.com/pages/classes>

Tree of Life Nursery 33201 Ortega Hwy, San Juan Capistrano, Tel: 949/728-0685

Sat. Feb. 25: "Habitat Garden: Butterflies". 9:30 – 10:30am. Free.

Find the best plants to nurture butterflies in your garden.

Early notice: Fullerton College's tomato sale is Friday – Sunday, March 4-6. And unlike previous years, stock will not be held back for Saturday and Sunday. Come early!

Leaves from the President



Gophers

A common and unwanted guest in our gardens is the gopher. Properly known as Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), it is native to western North America. It is also known in some sources as valley pocket gopher, particularly in California. Both the specific and common names of this species honor Paul-Émile Botta, a naturalist and archaeologist who collected mammals in California in the 1820s and 1830s. I guess everybody needs a hobby. Pocket gophers get their name because they have fur-lined pocket they can use to store food.



Pocket Gophers are strictly herbivorous feeders, eating a variety of plant matter. Shoots of grasses are of particular important, but also roots, tubers and bulbs during the winter. They have also been known to pull whole plants underground by the roots to enjoy in the safety of their burrows. Gophers spend as much as 90% of their time underground.

Gophers seem to enjoy freshly dug flowerbeds and vegetable garden, at least in my opinion. If you are putting a new bed and suspect gophers to be a problem, you can line the bed with gopher wire. However, that is not a practical solution for existing bed or tress.

Natural predators are not that much of a help either, as most of us don't have badgers, long

tailed weasels, or gophers snakes in our garden. Hawks will also take the occasional gopher, and I have watched a Great Blue Heron take a gopher in the park, but they are of limited help in the garden.

Pets: Some dogs and cats have proven to be good gopher hunters, and with cats being more of an ambush hunter, they tend to wait until the gopher sticks its head up and pounce on it. Dogs, on the other hand, seem to enjoy the digging as much as the hunt and can make more of a mess than the gopher. Not all dogs care about gophers; my dogs complete ignore them.

Gophers are not protected and, as far I can tell, no one cares if you want to kill them. So, what do you do if you have a gopher problem? There are a number of solutions on the internet but I think it boils down to 3 solutions that work.

1. Ignore them. As strange as it may seem, this is sometimes effective for controlling gophers. Gophers love a well-watered garden to play in, so if you keep your watering to a minimum, they may decide to go explore the neighbor's yard.
2. If the damage to your garden is at an unacceptable level, you can try trapping them. This may be the best method for killing the gopher. You place traps in the burrow on either side of the mound. You need to tie a string to the trap and tie it off to a stake or something large enough that it won't get pulled into the borrow. You should google "Fishing for Gophers", if you are interested. There are several videos and articles that explain the process better than I can here.
3. You can poison them. I am not sure I like the idea of using poison because of the danger to pets, but it is legal and it's your decision. Gassing them is not that effective because the gopher can quickly seal up the tunnel.

This is just the information I have found through my personal experience and the internet. If anyone has a better method for controlling gophers, please share.

Bill McMurrin, President
Orange County Independent Master Gardeners

Don Martin's Corner

Succulents are not new to us but we could always use some good growing tips.

1. when transplanting be mindful of the soil using a well-drained soil mix. Try to use 70% perlite and 30% other. sand and organic matter.

2. Be mindful of those with shallow rooted systems. Aloes - agaves - crassula all have shallow root systems. Transplant into a larger pot and try to give the plants more horizontal room than vertical . If the container has too much soil, it can slow down the over- all growth. After transplanting, don't let the soil dry completely.

3. Don't over-water; allow soil to almost dry out completely between watering. Once established, avoid watering mid-day. Plants won't use the water at this time of day. Also, if exposed to high light, watering could burn the leaves.

4. Most succulents like agaves and echeverias are slow growing. It could take a month or more to grow a few inches.

5. Feeding succulents: you may think succulents don't need to be fed. They can survive with low/no fertilizer, but this isn't recommended. Your succulents will thrive if fed small regular doses of nitrogen and potassium. Avoid fertilizer with heavy phosphorous as too much can harm the plants.

6. Exposure: Aloes, agave, sedum, kalanchoe and the like prefer full to part sun. For full sun-loving succulents, you're looking for exposure of 6000- to 10,000-foot candle power. This can enhance leaf color. There are some that can take part to full shade.

P.S. Be sure to read the tag to better understand what each variety's needs.

Plant Exchange and How To U at La Habra Library in June

Our annual plant exchange will be held at our June meeting. The La Habra Library's "How To U" will be held Saturday, June 17. I would like plants to give away at that time, so please start your cuttings now for both events! Also, please sign up to teach a workshop. I'd like classes on edibles, succulents, and maybe a redo of our fairy gardens. Other ideas welcome! Thank you so much! -- Jill

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New Master Gardener Classes Starting!

Kudos to Bob Shaw, who has organized our new OCIMG clases, starting in January. Most will be held at Prince of Peace Church (PoP) but our monthly meetings will be a joined meeting with the students and the topic being taught. If you'd like to attend classes other than those on our meeting date, please contact Bob first.

Jan 28: **Intro to master gardeners, OCIMG & Booth Duty** at PoP with Bob Shaw and Jerry Dankner

Feb. 4: **Soils & Fertilizers** at Patriot Hall with Gisele Schoniger of Kellogg

Feb. 11: **Composting** at PoP with Francine Kaplan

Feb. 18: **Edibles, Seed Exchange, & Containers** at PoP with Geri Cibellis

Feb. 25: **Lawn & Turf Care** at PoP with John Domenici of Marathon

Mar. 4: **Tree selection, care & pruning** at Patriot Hall with Sarah Taylor-Lane of Gruett

When Bob ordered the Master Gardener handbook for class, he found that there is a new edition with color pictures and a little more information. He will have a copy at the next group meeting in case anyone wants to see the new book; cost is \$37 each.