

Garden Clippings

Orange County Independent Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 23 Number 4

April 2017

April Meeting Saturday, April 1, 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 Roses

Members with last names starting with **H - Q**, 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: Roses with Tom Cooney

Tom Cooney is a Master Rosarian for the American Rose Society (ARS). He has been a Consulting Rosarian for 20 years and a Master Rosarian for 10 years.

Tom is the seven-term Past President of the Orange County Rose Society and a member of Santa Clarita, California Coastal, Pacific, and San Diego Rose Societies. He has held every elected office of the Orange County Rose Society with the exception of treasurer and is the current Rose Show Chairman. Tom has been growing roses for over 40 years and is an accomplished Rose Exhibitor having won several hundred blue ribbons at various ARS Pacific Southwest District and ARS National Rose Shows. He is the recipient of the ARS Bronze medal, the highest ARS award that a local rose society can bestow on a member.

Tom and his wife Miriam, who is a Consulting Rosarian and certified Rose Judge with ARS, grow over 300 roses in their Aliso Viejo garden. Among their roses are Hybrid Teas, Floribunda's, Shrubs, Old Garden Roses, as well as Miniatures and Mini Floras.

Marilyn Carne-Smith adds: Not only is he very active in the Rose Societies, he has been extremely helpful to me on a personal level. He has answered e-mails, phone calls and looked at all the problem leaves I have brought to meetings. He has patiently given advice and lots of education. In addition to helping one-on-one, Tom and his wife, Miriam, have opened their home to hold mini classes on "How to Exhibit Roses: a beginner's first lesson" and held the luncheon portion of a "Open House Day" for the entire Orange County club. They allowed us to walk throughout their rose garden and, as they say, "stop and smell the roses". It was a wonderful afternoon with lots of oohs and aahs. I hope everyone interested in how to grow beautiful roses will attend (and bring friends) and learn from all of Tom's experience.

Class Trip to Temecula for all OCIMG members

Our new class will be carpooling to Temecula, to the home of Ken Rager, who has six acres of rare fruit trees and is a member of the Rare Fruit Growers group in Temecula. Afterwards, we can visit a local vintner or tour the town (including the Temecula Olive Oil Company store downtown). All members are invited to participate. Details will be provided at the April 1 meeting; contact Bob Shaw at paradigmengineering@dslextreme.com for more information.

Leaves from the President



Every Spring I start out with high hopes for my Tomato crop. To help you (and myself), I made quick list of common tomatoes problems, and what can be done about them.

- **Cat-facing:** This is when irregular shapes and lines, especially at the top of the tomato, are caused by temperature shifts and incomplete pollination in cold weather at flowering time. There is nothing you can do about it. The tomato will still taste great. Next time, don't plant too early, or select varieties that resist cat-facing.
- **Blossom-end rot:** This is caused by poor calcium uptake due to inconsistent moisture. If you currently have this problem, remove any rotted or diseased tomatoes, provide consistent moisture, and keep a layer of mulch on the soil. If you live in a super hot area, you need to mulch around your tomatoes to keep them from drying out. They like nice even moisture.
- **Sunscald:** This can happen any time there is a real spike in the heat. If the fruit is far from ripe, chances are that the entire fruit will rot. Remove damaged tomatoes
- **Split skin or cracking:** This can happen any time the plants experience accelerated growth, which can be brought on by a sudden increase in moisture after being too dry, like summer rains after dry periods. To fix, provide consistent moisture, or look for varieties that are resistant to cracking. Another reason you may see splitting or cracking is that the fruit is overripe. There is nothing wrong with these tomatoes, they are great to eat, just keep them picked.
- In addition to this, many cherry tomatoes crack with the slightest shift in weather and after heavy rains, and there's not much you can do about it. If you can, try and pick all the ripe ones before it rains.
- **Flowers form, but few or no fruit develops:** Tomato flowers fall off prematurely when

there is a sudden change in the weather because it is too cool, or too hot, or the soil is too dry.

Improve the growing conditions. Mulch to keep the soil moisture even.

Use Blossom Set, which is a product that is all-natural, and environmentally friendly. It's a natural plant hormone that helps blossoms set fruit in spite of poor weather conditions, and produce larger, meatier tomatoes with fewer seeds. Use early in the season and get tomatoes up to three weeks earlier. When tomato flowers are fully open, spray regularly for bigger yields all season. It can also be used to increase fruit set on cucumbers, melons, eggplants, strawberries, and peppers.

- **Green shoulders:** Some tomatoes are unimproved old-time varieties and end up with "green shoulders." That's just the way they grow, and there's not much you can do about it.
- **A thick, tough skin develops on the fruit:** This can happen for a couple of reasons:

Varietal differences: Many of the more common hybrids have tougher skins bred into them for shipping purposes. Varieties like Roma or Plum tomatoes genetically have thick skin.

The Weather: Dry or very hot summers tend to produce thick skinned tomatoes, because of extreme heat fluctuations. Even if you're watering the garden regularly, when the sun is hotter, and the air is hotter through the days, it can result in thicker skins as the plants try to conserve moisture.

Inconsistent moisture levels in the soil or excessively high air temperatures contribute to the problem as the plants try to conserve moisture.

So weather and varietal issues are the main causes, and there really isn't much that can be done, except grow more tomatoes next year and hope for cooler temperatures.

- **Tomato hornworm:** Big ugly green caterpillar with a big stinger on the end. Can be found by locating leaf damage. Best way to get rid of them hand harvesting, beware of the stinger.

- **Early blight:** This is caused by a fungus that survives during the winter on old vines. To fix, remove and destroy all diseased foliage. In the future, avoid overcrowding by planting farther apart, and prune for good air circulation. You'll also need to rotate tomatoes with unrelated crops, such as corn, beans or lettuce.

- **Late blight:** This is caused by a fungus that is favored by wet weather. Their spores travel great distances and can infect large areas. Again, avoid overcrowding, and if the infection is severe and widespread, remove and destroy all affected plants.

- **Wilts:**

Fusarium and Verticillium fungi cause parts of the plant to wilt, and can kill it over time. Fusarium wilt causes leaves on one branch of infected plant to turn yellow. Verticillium wilt first appears as yellowing between the major veins on mature leaves. To help this problem, look for resistant varieties to plant, and rotate unrelated crops, such as corn, beans or lettuce.

Southern Bacterial Wilt results in sudden plant death; leaves droop (wilt) while plant is still green and otherwise healthy. There is nothing you can do except remove and destroy all debris, and do not plant tomatoes where the disease has occurred in the past.

- **Root-knot nematodes:** This is caused by microscopic eelworms that live in the soil. In the future, plant resistant varieties, and try rotating tomatoes with marigolds. Select a French variety such as 'Nema-gone', 'Golden Guardian', or 'Tangerine'. Plant the entire affected area heavily with the marigolds, and grow them for at least three months. After three months, till them into the soil. This is why it is wise not to plant tomatoes in the same spot every year.

Bill McMurrin, President
Orange County Independent Master Gardeners

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Need Volunteer Hours?

If you're short of volunteer hours, an easy way to earn some is to write an article for the newsletter. Your research and writing time all count. Articles should be sent to the editor by the 10th of the month to be included in that month's issue.

Warren Bowen

Long-time member Warren Bowen died February 18 at age 92 in his Fullerton home. Bowen was a former high school teacher and career guidance counselor and was a part time adult education administrator for the North Orange County Community College District. He was an active member of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and a board member of the Fullerton College Foundation and Fullerton Heritage Board, chair of the local Red Cross Blood Bank, member of the Fullerton City Bicentennial Commission, a founding member of the Friends of the Fullerton Arboretum, and a member of OLLI. He wrote on Fullerton history for the Fullerton Observer. He was the CSU Fullerton Volunteer of the Year in 1998 and received the 2015 Harry Brown award from Pathways of Hope.

His memorial was held on March 18 and donations may be given in his name to Pathways of Hope, P.O. Box 6326, Fullerton, 92834 or to the Fullerton Arboretum at http://fullertonarboretum.org/support_giving.php

Gardening Events

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

Sat-Sun. April 22 - 23: “Green Scene”. 10am-4pm. \$8/free for members

The big event at the Arboretum with specialty plant vendors, workshops, demos and plein air painting.

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

Sat. April 8: “Spring Rose Care”, 9 - 10am. Free.

Kim Sterling and Lynn Hillman will explain how to care for roses and answer questions about the current drought conditions and its effect.

Sat. -Sun. April 29 - 30: “Sweet Pea Contest”, 9am - 5pm. Free.

3rd Annual Sweet Pea show. Customers are invited to bring in their own cut stems. with the variety name if known, before 11am on Saturday, at which time judging will take place. There will be prizes for the three best entries. Flowers will be on display until 5pm on Sunday.

Armstrong Nurseries: Free classes are provided at most locations. Learn how to grow vegetables April 8, care for citrus on April 22, and understand beneficial bugs on April 29, all at 8am. Free ladybugs with purchase will be given on April 22 and 23. Website is:

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

UC Riverside, 900 University Ave. Riverside

Sat. – Sun. April 1-2. Botanic Gardens spring plant sale, \$5 suggested donation. Website is <http://gardens.ucr.edu>

Drought-tolerant and California natives.

Coming up May 6-7: The Mary Lou Heard Memorial Garden tour of residential gardens from Long Beach to San Clemente.

<http://heardsgardentour.com>

Need Gardening Gear?

Duluth Trading Co. has a good selection. Check out their website at: duluthwomen.com and click “Heirloom Gardening Gear” on the right.

Back to Native Plant of the Week Rosa californica



It’s rose season and this quaint native variety has a lovely scent. It does like to spread, so give it plenty of space. The rose hips make a delicious tea that is high in vitamin C.

Flowers: pink in spring

Size: 6 ft x 6 ft

Sun: Full sun to part shade

Soils: many



“How-To U” at La Habra Library June 17

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. Please start your cuttings now for both events! For the “How To U”, edibles, herbs, and succulents are especially needed. We will have workshops on edibles (Diane W), roses (Marilyn), bromeliads (Nancy Bird), chickens (4H), and succulents (Nancy S). Thank you!-- Jill

School Garden at Prince of Peace Church Nick Latimer reports

The preschool at POP wants us to give advice on the next step for their raised bed garden. The preschool has funds for the materials and would like us, as Master Gardeners, to coordinate the project ordering, guide the delivery (I do have an idea of where to put the wood and soil), make sure it is properly laid out, and suggest what the school should plant. This is an approved venue so volunteer hours can be submitted. See the next page for the school’s first day of planting.



Prince Of Peace School Garden: From Soil to Seedlings

