



Garden Notes

"Creating edible and ornamental gardens"

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April 2016

Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

Claremont Eclectic: A Tour of Six Local Gardens

April 24, 1pm-4pm, \$20 includes admission to RSABG, tickets at www.sustainableclaremont.org ; also at Claremont Heritage (in Memorial Park), Rio de Ojas (250 Harvard Ave), and RSABG giftshop



Spring has sprung!

A lovely bed of poppies, tidy-tips, lupines, phacelia, and penstemons, against a background of sages and buckwheat.

Creating a Meadow

Meadows are lovely, but not maintenance-free.

Here's an outline for replacing a lawn (now or in the fall):

1. Choose a mostly sunny area with good drainage.
2. Decide on a mix of annuals, biennials and perennials that have evolved to do well in your local conditions. You can plant all from seed or include some perennials from pots for a faster start.
3. Be sure none of your choices are invasive species!
4. Native bunch grasses help support wildflowers as well as add structure and variety. Some meadows are all grasses; others a mix.
5. Remove the turf from the area (or sheet mulch). Dig only deep enough to remove the roots or you will bring up lots of weed seeds.
6. Water and let the weed seeds grow for a couple of weeks. Carefully remove the weeds, disturbing the soil as little as possible or you will bring up more weed seeds.
7. Right away sow your seeds evenly over the area (note: seed mixes may not distribute all the varieties evenly because of differences in seed weight and size. See American Meadows link for tips on sowing).
8. Press the seeds into the soil but don't cover them, and water every few days until the plants are established. Then water as needed.
9. Pull up weeds as soon as you identify them. Never let them seed!
10. Let at least half the annuals and biennials go to seed each year before you mow. Mow high and reseed any bare spots.

<http://www.americanmeadows.com/>

<http://www.wildflower.org/howto/show.php?id=5>

Ornamental of the Month

Dendromecon harfordii



Island Bush Poppy is an evergreen shrub native to the Channel Islands. Grows at a moderate rate to 6-10 ft tall and wide. Flowers February to June. Sun to part shade, good drainage, drought-tolerant. Avoid damaging roots when planting; Can be pruned back up to halfway in fall for denser shrub.

Edible of the Month

Anthriscus cerefolium



Chervil is an annual herb to 18" tall by 12" wide; parsley-shaped leaves with faint licorice flavor. Part of French *finest herbes*. Good with vegetables (especially carrots), poultry, seafood, quiche. Sow in place every few weeks in spring or fall in cool, moist area; bolts in heat. (Photo of close relative from Hardy Plant Society)

What's an invasive species?

When an organism is introduced (intentionally like starlings and kudzu, or accidentally like zebra mussels) into an area where it did not evolve but where it has good growing conditions and few if any natural controls, it can run rampant and start to crowd out native species. What is invasive in one area may not be in another, tho; for example, purple loosestrife is a real pest in wetlands but it's not a threat to desert and scrub habitats. You can see a list of invasive plants of California at <http://www.cal-ipc.org/paf/>.

Some plants that are not threats to local natural habitats can, however, be invasive in the garden. I foolishly planted some airplane plants, *Chlorophytum comosum*. Before I knew it, small plantlets on the



Etiolated succulent

ends of long stems rooted, leapfrogging and smothering whatever was next to them, and the thick, fleshy roots are hard to dig out.

Commelina benghalensis (Bengal dayflower, photo left) is a fast-growing native of subtropical Asia and Africa that gained a foothold in California in the 1980s. It is considered a serious weed wherever it grows.



Fortunately, our native coastal sage scrub habitat is too dry for it; unfortunately, it seeds itself around my garden with gay abandon. The flowers are a beautiful blue, but the seedlings number in the hundreds and come up almost as well in beds of ivy as in bare ground.

Favorite Quote (courtesy of Sharron Neyer)

"They know, they just know where to grow, how to dupe you, and how to camouflage themselves among the perfectly respectable plants, they just know, and therefore, I've concluded weeds must have brains."

Dianne Benson

Upcoming events and more

April 2: Huerta del Valle open day, noon-9pm, food, music, workshops, Bon

View Park, 803 E. Belmont St, Ontario, CA (917) 734-8108

April 13: Garden Club – 6:30-8:30 pm, talk at 7pm, Napier Center, 660 Avery

Rd, Claremont. **"Sourcing Organic Material for Your Garden"**

April 24: Our garden tour—proceeds fund all our activities!

Smart Gardening Workshops, 9:30-11 am, free. For dates and locations, see

http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sg/wk_scheds.cfm

Chino Basin Water District: classes on waterwise landscaping, irrigation;

mulch giveaways: <http://www.cbwcd.org/150/Workshop-Descriptions>

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

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden: www.rsabg.org/upcoming-events

Huntington Library: Free talks, plant sales www.huntington.org/

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: "Dendromecon" comes from "dendron" meaning "tree" and "mekon" meaning "poppy"; "cerefolium" means "waxy-leaf".

Plant miscellanea: "Etiolation" is rapid stem growth with extended internodes, often with paler leaves, due to a lack of sufficient light (photo at left of succulent that should be a compact rosette).

Things to do in April

General

✓ Make sure water is getting down far enough to encourage deep roots

✓ Mulch!

Pest/disease management

✓ Cherry tomatoes are more resistant to hornworms

✓ Attract beneficial insects with flowers in umbels (carrots, parsley, dill, etc) and heads (daisies, goldenrod, etc)

✓ Use insecticidal soap for leafhoppers

✓ Avoid diatomaceous earth which also kills ladybugs and spiders

Edibles

✓ Sow/plant beans, cucumber, melons, squash, tomatoes, eggplant,

✓ Sow corn and peppers end of month

✓ Sow last heat-tolerant peas

✓ Sow herbs: dill, fennel, thyme, basil, tarragon, borage, chives, cilantro

✓ Plant citrus, avocados, pomegranates

✓ Start thinning fruit on trees and vines

Ornamentals

✓ Divide ornamental grasses

✓ Sow summer annuals

✓ Water and feed spring bulbs until foliage yellows, let dry out, shake off dirt and store

✓ Prune hedges: wider bottom than top

✓ Pinch new growth on geraniums, chrysanthemums, lavender, fuchsias

✓ Take cuttings of epiphyllums

Please send photos and info about plants you've grown, gardens to visit, gardening lore, questions. Sue Schenk, editor

The Metropolitan Water District is not currently offering rebates for turf removal.

<http://socialwatersmart.com/index.php/>

Facebook: Claremont Garden Club

Instagram: Claremont_Garden_Club