



Garden Notes

“Creating edible and ornamental gardens”

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Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

🐼 **Happy New Year to you all!**



Two to visit

The Fullerton Arboretum, top photo, is only half an hour away and full of interesting plants. The sugar bush photo at right was taken there. If you can't find a California native at RSABG's Grow Native Nursery, then you might find it here at The Potting Shed. (<http://fullertonarboretum.org/home.php>)



If you happen to go to Las Vegas, be sure to visit the botanical garden at Springs Preserve to see drought tolerant gardens, a sustainably-designed solar-powered desert house, and an entertaining recycling exhibit. (<http://www.springspreserve.org/>)

To prune or not to prune in winter?

A gardener's thoughts naturally turn to pruning when plants go dormant like the vine in the photo at bottom left (courtesy of Sharron Neyer). So what should you consider before grabbing the shears?

Ornamental trees

- Whether they need any pruning depends on the tree. I've had my slow-growing cedar pruned once in 30 years, just to get branches off the roof. But I have my fast-growing mulberry trimmed in the fall every two or three years.
- The point of pruning is to keep the tree healthy and safe by removing dead, damaged, or diseased wood, branches that are so long they are likely to break, or to thin the crown a bit so wind can move through it easily.
- Sometimes you might want to remove some branches to give the tree a better shape, or bottom ones to let more light get to plants underneath.



- But no more than 20% of the branches should be removed, and often less.
- Never top, hat-rack, pollard, bowl cut, etc a tree, all of which look ugly, weaken the tree, and encourage water sprouts.
- Every tree species has a specific shape and after pruning the tree should look natural—no one should notice that it has been pruned!

Ornamental of the Month

Rhus ovata



Sugar Bush is one of our lovely local natives. These evergreen shrubs have reddish stems and thick, glossy, pointed leaves folded along the midrib. They grow at a moderate rate to about 10 ft by 10 ft, although they can be a pruned smaller. Used as an informal hedge, specimen shrub, or small multi-trunk tree. Sun or part shade, very drought tolerant, more fire resistant than many, good on slopes. Small pink flowers in spring followed by flat pink fruits. Attracts birds and butterflies.

Edible of the Month

Citrus x meyeri "Improved"



Meyer lemons are thought to be a cross between an orange or mandarin and a lemon. The plants are smaller than other lemons, about 6ft by 6ft, and like regular water. They tolerate some shade and do well in mixed plantings like the one above growing with ferns and ivy. Fragrant summer flowers are followed by ripe fruit in winter; less acid than regular lemons..

Fruit trees

(Info <http://homeorchard.ucdavis.edu/8057.pdf> and <http://cesonoma.ucanr.edu/files/27164.pdf>)

- Summer pruning to keep a tree under 8ft x 8 ft makes it easy to pick fruit although it reduces the crop (all to the good if you can't use 80 lbs of plums).
- In winter, you can remove dead or crossing branches, suckers, branches that crowd the center or are too long. Wounds on apricots are susceptible to fungal infections in wet weather, so wait till late winter to prune them.
- Some trees produce fruit mostly on short shoots and spurs (apple, apricot, pears, plums) and others fruit mostly along last season's growth (peach, nectarine) so be careful not to prune off all the fruiting wood.

Ornamental shrubs

- Just like trees, you can remove dead and diseased wood any time.
- Shrubs often look best if their natural shape is kept.
- Some plants look best with heavy pruning each year, and others do best with just a few branches shortened to maintain shape. Check out information about your shrub before pruning to find out what works best for it. Rosemary, for example, will not resprout from old woody stems.
- If the plant blooms in winter or spring like camellias, winter pruning will remove most of the flower buds so wait until after blooming to prune.
- Most plants that bloom in the summer or fall can be pruned in winter.

Favorite quote: (courtesy of Sharron Neyer)

"Gardens are a form of autobiography." Sydney Eddison

One of the good guys! (Seen visiting a CHS strawberry bed)



California praying mantises (*Stagmomantis californica*) are about 2-2 ½ inches long and love to lurk in vegetation, waiting for any insect (including other mantises) deemed small enough to eat. They live alone and seldom for more than nine months. Yes, the females often do eat the males during or after mating which helps provide the protein needed to produce 100 or more eggs in a hard brown and white case about an inch long. The cases are glued to a convenient stem, rock, or board in the fall (I found one while pruning my wisteria). The young mantises emerge in the spring and each consumes thousands of pests during its life.

Upcoming events and more

Jan 13: Garden Club—6:30-8:30 pm, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, Claremont.

Talk at 7pm by **April Garbat: "Plant Pairings"**

Upland opens a Seed Library! <http://www.uplandpl.lib.ca.us/>

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: "Ovata" means "egg-shaped"; "meyeri" references Frank Meyer who collected the plant from China.

Plant miscellanea: Water moves up from the roots in tubes that form part of the "xylem" and sugars move up and down in tubes that form part of the "phloem". Bundles of these tubes create the midrib and veins you see in leaves, forming a vascular system that distributes water, nutrients and sugars throughout the plant.

Things to do in January

General

- ✓ Digging wet soil causes compaction, removes air spaces, reduces drainage
- ✓ Wait til spring to prune off frost-damaged branches
- ✓ Renew compost and mulch
- ✓ Water CA natives and citrus if no rain

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Spray horticultural oil on leaf underside in citrus to control whitefly
- ✓ Sprinkle food-grade diatomaceous earth on ground to deter snails
- ✓ Clean up dropped camellia blossoms to reduce petal blight
- ✓ Pull weeds as soon as they appear

Edibles

- ✓ Plant lettuce, kale, chard, garlic, onion sets, peas, parsley, savoy spinach
- ✓ Plant asparagus, artichokes, rhubarb
- ✓ Plant bareroot trees, grapes, berries

Ornamentals

- ✓ Deadhead pansies to keep blooming
- ✓ Cut stalk of gift amaryllis to 1" after bloom, keep in pot or plant in ground in warm spot in sun or light shade
- ✓ Feed azaleas, camellias
- ✓ Sprinkle wildflower seeds after rain
- ✓ Prune roses
- ✓ Cut back Japanese Blood Grass

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://socalwatersmart.com/index.php/>

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