



# Garden Notes

“Creating edible and ornamental gardens”

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## Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

🐞 **Please send us questions about gardening and we will do our best to answer them!**



**Our booth at Earth Day** was a great success. Thanks to all who helped with it, including the Rojos (pictured left)! We'll be setting up again at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration in Memorial Park, so if any of you would like to help, let us know.

## Member questions:

**Do you really need to wash and sanitize containers to reuse them?** The counsel of perfection is “yes” so that you don't pass along any infectious material they may contain. [But I admit I usually just wash them out with water (unless the previous plant was ill) and have never had a problem.]

**Can you reuse potting soil?** Again, ideally no, you should spread it around and dig it into the ground somewhere (unless the plants were ill). However, I've left the soil in some very large patio pots for several years, just changing out the plants and adding fertilizer, and the plants have done well.

**Is there a way to kill grasshoppers without harming beneficial insects?** This is very difficult as pesticides kill them all. The good news is that serious grasshopper invasions generally only occur every 8-10 years (although they can last 2 or 3 years). The following may help, but since grasshoppers are very mobile, they can migrate into your garden from other places outside of it.

- Grasshoppers lay eggs in the soil, so tilling the surface 1-2 inches a few times in late summer, fall and winter may reduce the number that develop.
- The young hoppers like to live in areas of dense plant growth where spiders, blister beetles robber flies, and suchlike prey on the eggs and nymphs, so arrange to have a few areas like that.
- Grasshoppers prefer uncultivated, weedy, grassy areas, so if you have an out of the way spot, you might let it go (but keep it healthy) and hope the pests think of it as prime real estate compared to your weeded beds.
- Some birds eat young grasshoppers so provide some perches in the garden (coyotes eat grasshoppers too but you may not want to attract them!).
- Among vegetables, they generally give tomatoes, squash and peas a miss, but delight in lettuce, carrots, and beans and onions.
- Putting row covers over your vegetables can reduce the damage. Hungry hoppers can eat through fabric and plastic, so consider using metal window

## Ornamental of the Month:

*Hydrangea quercifolia*



Oakleaf hydrangea is one of my favorite plants. Needs shade, good drainage, low to moderate water. Deciduous, with nice fall color. Fuzzy buds produce leaves to 8"; 10" conical panicles of white flowers May to July, turning pinkish, which look attractive dried. To 10 ft tall and wide, but can be pruned just after flowering (later pruning will remove next year's flowers).

## Edible of the Month:

*Ocimum basilicum*

Basil is a frost-tender short-lived perennial. Grow in pots or the ground; sun, ample water, good drainage. Pinch out flowers or leaf production stops. Many varieties: Thai, sweet, purple, lemon etc. Indispensable in tomato sauces and pesto, it can also flavor desserts. Use leaves fresh. A great summer salad is 4c cubed watermelon, ½c thinly sliced onion, 1/4c raspberry vinegar, 2-4T shredded basil leaves, salt and pepper. Mix, chill and eat the same day.



screening. Be aware, tho, that covers` may reduce insect pollination of your crops, so you may need to do some hand-pollination.



## Favorite quote

(courtesy of Patty Lindberg)

***“An addiction to gardening is not bad when you consider all the other choices in life.”***  
Cora Lee Bell

## Pruning wisteria

One of the most beautiful climbing plants, wisteria can also be a bit of a thug if not contained, but proper pruning will help keep it under control.

**Established plants:** The plants bloom on last year’s wood, so they should be pruned about two months after flowering, right about now. Cut the long, leafy stems of this year’s growth back to about 6 inches from the framework branches, about 1/4 inch above a bud. If the plant is too tangled, cut some branches out entirely. Also remove any that are twining around the support since wisteria is notorious for pulling down arbors as it grows. Although this summer pruning will encourage more flower buds to form and keep the growth in check, the plant will continue to produce new stems over the summer, so it’s best to prune again in early winter. Cut the new stems back to 3-5 buds, even if they are short stems, and this will encourage the plant to put its energy into flowers.

**New plants:** Buy a grafted variety and it should bloom in a couple of years. Seed-grown ones may take 7 or more years (mine is a ‘volunteer’ in my garden and took 10 years for the first bloom). Make sure the support you use is very strong, loosely tie the stems to it and continue to tie them in until it is the height and spread you want. Prune to create the desired branch structure, such as a network over a patio cover, and then follow the instructions above to produce the most flowers. Be sure to remove ties as soon as you can or replace them with looser ones so that the stems don’t become strangled as they increase in girth.

<http://www.finegardening.com/pruning-and-training-wisteria>

## Upcoming events and more

**June 11 : Garden Club meeting,** 7-9 pm Napier Center at Pilgrim Place,  
**“Growing Herbs: from natural remedies to culinary ventures”** a talk  
by Dessa D’Aquila

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

All start at 9am and are free, no registration required

June 7 or 8: Attracting hummingbirds and butterflies

June 14 or 15: Lavenders explained

June 21 or 22: Citrus care

June 28 or 29: Plumeria care

**RSABG events:** <http://www.rsabg.org/upcoming-events>

**→July and August: no Garden Club meetings**

## Did you know?

**Botanical Latin:** “quercifolia” means it has leaves (“folia”) similar to those of an oak (*Quercus* species); “basilicum” is a reference to “king” (some call basil the “king of herbs”).

**Plant miscellanea:** Not everything that looks like a flower is one. Bright Bougainvillea “flowers” are actually modified, colored leaves called “bracts” which surround the small, white, true flowers (see photo at left from Wikipedia).

## Things to do in June

### General

- ✓ Walk around and enjoy the garden!
- ✓ (but keep an eye out for problems)

### Pest/disease management

- ✓ Yellow leaves with green veins indicate iron deficiency
- ✓ Clean up fruit that falls in “June drop”
- ✓ Protect berries-netting or row covers
- ✓ Treat powdery mildew: spray with 1T baking soda and 1T horticultural oil per gallon water

### Edibles

- ✓ Feed citrus
- ✓ Do a final thinning on fruit trees to space fruit evenly a few inches apart
- ✓ Hot weather causes cool season crops (lettuce, spinach, chard etc) to bolt so replace with beans, squash, basil, cucumber, eggplant, peppers
- ✓ Cut runners off strawberries

### Ornamentals

- ✓ Prune once-blooming climbing roses
- ✓ Plant palms
- ✓ Move fuschias and epiphyllums to filtered shade
- ✓ Water established natives in morning if drooping; irrigate newly planted natives every couple of weeks
- ✓ Stake and deadhead perennials

**Please send photos and info about plants you’ve grown, gardens you’ve visited, gardening lore you’ve learned, questions you have.** Sue Schenk, editor

The Metropolitan Water District is offering rebates for turf removal, rain barrels, soil moisture sensor systems. Info at: <http://socialwatersmart.com/index.php/home/?p=res>