



# Garden Notes

"Creating edible and ornamental gardens"

[www.sustainableclaremont.org](http://www.sustainableclaremont.org)

[gardenclub@sustainableclaremont.org](mailto:gardenclub@sustainableclaremont.org)

March 2016

## Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

 Please send us questions about gardening

Garden tour tickets now available! (See upcoming events)



### Rancho Los Alamitos ([www.ranchosalamitos.com/](http://www.ranchosalamitos.com/))

This is well worth a visit if you are in the Long Beach area (Open W-F, 1pm-5pm, free). There is a historic adobe, a farm yard, and lovely gardens. The succulent garden has one of the largest agaves I've seen!

### Favorite Quote

"A garden is a complex of aesthetic and plastic intentions; and the plant is, to a landscape artist, not only a plant—rare, unusual, ordinary or doomed to disappearance—but it is also a color, a shape, a volume or an arabesque in itself."

Roberto Burle Marx

### Species, variety, hybrid, cultivar

You hear all these terms a lot, but the distinctions between them may not be clear, so here is some help (we hope):

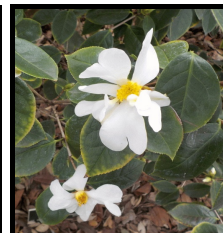
**Species:** A group of individuals which share similar characteristics and which can produce fertile offspring. In plants, the flower characteristics are usually the most reliable features for deciding similarity, and DNA analysis also helps to determine relationships. *Ribes aureum* (golden currant) is distinct from *Ribes speciosum* (California gooseberry).

**Variety:** A natural subgroup of a species that breeds true. *Ribes aureum* var. *gracillimum* is a variety of golden currant whose yellow flowers turn red, and plants grown from its seeds will also do this.

**Hybrid:** Usually the offspring from a cross between different species or varieties (rarely between two genera). The hope is that they will show the best characteristics of both parents. However, when hybrids are crossed with each other, their offspring may look like they do or like the parents of the hybrids. For instance, an individual with large flowers and one with fragrant flowers may have offspring that all show both characters, but if those hybrid offspring are then crossed, the new population will have some individuals with large flowers, some with fragrant flowers, and some with both traits. Sometimes breeders are able work with a hybrid until it breeds true (all the offspring look like the

## Ornamental of the Month

*Camellia* species



There are many varieties of *C. japonica* (left) as well as many other species such as Chinese *C. grijsii* (right). Some are low and spreading, some make small trees. Winter/spring flowers may be white, pink, red, or even yellow and some are fragrant. Fairly slow-growing, take quite a bit of shade, relatively drought-tolerant when established. What little pruning is needed should be done after flowering. Subject to petal blight so infected flowers should be picked up right away and put in the trash.

[www.americancamellias.com](http://www.americancamellias.com)

## Edible of the Month

*Mahonia* (*Berberis*) species



These evergreen shrubs come in many sizes. *M. aquifolium* (Oregon Grape) is about 6'x6'; *M. repens* is a groundcover. The leaves are stiff and prickly. The yellow flowers appear in winter and are followed by dark blue berries that birds love. They also make good jam. Sun/part shade, low water, good barrier. "Golden Abundance" is a 6'x6' cultivar that was developed at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.

parents) but usually you need to repeat the cross each time you want to produce hybrid seed.

**Cultivar:** This is a contraction of “cultivated variety”, one due to human influence. These have the species name followed by the cultivar name (capitalized, not italicized, and in single quotes) as *Cercis canadensis* ‘Forest Pansy’ (an eastern redbud). Cultivars can be new varieties and breed true to type; they may be the result of sports or mutations, in which case they would need to be vegetatively propagated (cloned) for the characteristics to be passed on; or they may be hybrids which would need to be reproduced from the original parent species. Plants can be both a variety and a cultivar: for example *Cornus florida* var. *rubra* ‘Fastigata’ (an upright pink dogwood).

## Edible flowers

The flowers of many garden plants are edible and look as beautiful garnishing food as they do in the garden. Some of the most common ones are pansies, violas, roses, borage, nasturtiums, daylilies (but not other lilies), squash blossoms, chives, marigolds, dandelions. The list is legion! Before picking those blossoms, tho, be sure of the following:

- You have the correct species (not all flowers are edible)
- The plants are garden-grown, not growing wild
- You don’t pick parts of the plant that may not be edible
- None of the plant has been treated with pesticides or other chemicals
- You use small amounts—sometimes, too much can cause an adverse reaction

An informative and extensive lists, with recipes, can be found at [www.whatscookingamerica.net/EdibleFlowers/EdibleFlowersMain.htm](http://www.whatscookingamerica.net/EdibleFlowers/EdibleFlowersMain.htm)



Radish

## Upcoming events and more

**March 9: Garden Club**—6:30-8:30 pm, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, Claremont. Talk at 7pm by Master Gardener George Gentilly from OSH on “Garden Tools--how to choose, use, and care for them”

**Mar 12-13: Descanso Gardens** ([www.descansogardens.org/](http://www.descansogardens.org/)) Cherry blossom festival, and you can still see a lot of camellias in bloom, along with some beautiful deciduous magnolias and spring bulbs

**April 24: Garden Tour**, 1pm-4pm, \$20 includes admission to RSABG, tickets at <http://www.sustainableclaremont.org/>; also at Claremont Heritage (in Memorial Park, M-F, 9am -1pm), or Rio de Ojas (250 Harvard Ave)

**Smart Gardening Workshops**, 9:30-11 am, free. For dates and locations, see [http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sg/wk\\_scheds.cfm](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](http://www.rsabg.org/upcoming-events)  
March 12--free admission and plant sale

**Huntington Library:** Free talks, plant sales [www.huntington.org/](http://www.huntington.org/)

**Grow LA Victory Garden Initiative Classes:** To see schedule, go to [http://celosangeles.ucanr.edu/UC\\_Master\\_Gardener\\_Program/](http://celosangeles.ucanr.edu/UC_Master_Gardener_Program/)

## Did you know?

**Botanical Latin:** “Aquifolium” means “holly-leaved”; “repens” means “having creeping or rooting stems”

**Plant miscellanea:** A “sport” is a part of a plant that shows a physical difference from the rest of the plant, like variegated leaves or a vining stem. These parts can be asexually propagated as were climbing ‘Iceberg’ rose and nectarines (developed from a bud mutation in a peach that eliminated the fuzz).

## Things to do in March

### General

- ✓ Order seeds and plants; chose some that will produce edible flowers
- ✓ Start seeds to set out later
- ✓ Start a journal to keep track of what you do when, successes and failures
- ✓ Check/install drip irrigation systems

### Pest/disease management

- ✓ Wash off, squash, or cut off aphids
- ✓ Foil cutworms: Cut 2" rings from wrapping paper tubes, slip gently over tomato seedlings and bury ½" in soil
- ✓ If nematodes were a problem, plant area solidly with French marigolds and nothing else this season
- ✓ Place berry baskets over sprouting corn and bean plants to keep birds off

### Edibles

- ✓ Plant tomato seeds outdoors
- ✓ Start melon, squash, cucumber indoors to plant in April
- ✓ Pick peas before fully mature
- ✓ Design a herb garden

### Ornamentals

- ✓ Plant sweet alyssum, cosmos, zinnia
- ✓ Excellent time to plant local natives
- ✓ Plant citrus and avocados
- ✓ Cut back clumps of *Festuca*
- ✓ De-thatch warm season lawns once they start back into growth

**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