




Garden Notes

www.sustainableclaremont.org

gardenclub@sustainableclaremont.org

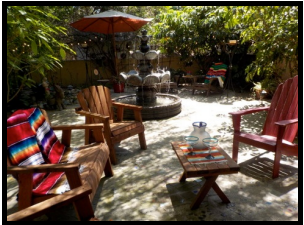
May 2015

Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

 Please send us questions about gardening--we will do our best to answer them!



The Garden Tour was a lot of fun! Many thanks to the garden owners, the docents, and everyone else who made the tour a success! (Photos by Amy Rojo and Sue Schenk)



Ornamental of the Month

Prosopis species



Mesquites are semi-deciduous, with fernlike leaves. They are fast-growing shrubs or small trees (to 25 ft tall and broad) which require little or no watering due to deep roots. *P. glandulosa*, our native honey mesquite, is very thorny, but other species and hybrids are thornless. Clusters of 3" brushlike groups of tiny yellow flowers in April are followed by long brown seed pods. Very attractive to bees.

Edible of the Month

Cucumis melo var. cantalupo



Cantaloupe is a good source of vitamins C and A, and only about 50 cal/cup. Plant in small hills about 3 ft apart in full sun in rich soil. Give 1-2" water/week as vines grow; reduce as fruit ripens to improve flavor. Male flowers appear before females. Pinch off ends of vines when fruits grow to get fewer but better fruit. Refrigerate as soon as ripe. Wash well before cutting to reduce harmful bacteria. Interesting recipes at <http://www.marthastewart.com/search/results?key=cantaloupe>. Some heirloom varieties at <http://www.anniesheirloomseeds.com>.

(Photo from Wikipedia)



Agaves (Photos by Amy Rojo)

The top photo at left shows three common agaves: soft-leaved, bright green *Agave attenuata* (foxtail agave, also below left), short, rounded, gray-leaved *Agave parryi* (Parry's agave), and a tall, yellow-variegated *Agave americana* (century plant).



All are slow-growing, drought-tolerant, and form clumps. *A. parryi* rosettes may reach 2 ft across. Each plant of *A. americana* can grow to 5ft tall and wide, and flowering stalks can reach 20 ft tall (stays smaller in pots). The species is blue-gray, but variegated ones are popular. Unlike other agaves, *A. attenuata* tolerates some shade and has stems. Its rosettes can reach 3 ft across on 4 ft tall leafless stalks, but

the tops can be cut off with about 4" of stem and replanted. The yellow/green plant at right in the photos is *Aeonium decorum* "Sunburst".



Variegated foliage

Many of us liven up areas of our gardens with plants that have variegated leaves, like the Japanese maple (*Acer japonica*) top left and the pittosporum (*Pittosporum tobira* "Variegata") bottom left, and you may have wondered why all leaves aren't green.

Sometimes, when a cell divides as the leaves are forming, a mutation occurs which prevents it from producing chlorophyll. This means the area of the leaf with the descendants of that cell remains white or yellow. Of course, that also means the affected part of the leaf can't perform photosynthesis, so variegated forms of a plant often grow more slowly than do green-leaved forms.

When a branch on a green plant spontaneously shows variegation, plant breeders often cut it off and root or graft it to produce a plant that shows the variegation throughout. The pattern may be predictable, like along the leaf edges of the maple above or in spots as on the leaves of many aloes, or it may vary from leaf to leaf. Sometimes the variegation will be passed on by seed, but in some cases the plant needs to be cloned to keep it.

Many variegated plants occasionally produce branches that revert to the all-green form like the ones at the left in the top photo. These branches tend to be more vigorous and can outgrow the variegated ones so that the plant can eventually become all green. Pruning these out when they occur can help prevent this. Some plants like the variegated pittosporum in the bottom photo can do the opposite and put out branches that have no chlorophyll at all. These get food from nearby leaves that do have chlorophyll.

Favorite Quote (courtesy of Sharron Neyer)

"The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies."

Gertrude Jekyll

Upcoming events and more

May 1: Trip to Lyle Regenerative Center, 10 am

May 13: Garden Club—6:30-8:30 pm, Location change: Porter Hall—enter Pilgrim Place on 6th St and the hall is straight ahead
Talk at 7pm by John Schneckloth: "Plumerias"

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>
This month: Citrus, Lawn alternatives, Waterwise plants, Herbs, Hydrangeas

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

Huntington Library: Free talks plus plant sales on second Thursdays
www.huntington.org/WebAssets/Templates/content.aspx?id=538

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: "Melo" means "apple-shaped", and "japonica" of course means from Japan.

Plant miscellanea: Flowers that have all four parts—sepals, petals, stamens, and pistil—are called "complete". Ones that have both stamens and pistils are called "perfect", so it is possible for a flower to be incomplete but still be perfect.

Things to do in May

General

- ✓ Remove "volunteers" where not wanted—toss or plant elsewhere
- ✓ Mulch, hand-pull or hoe to control weeds
- ✓ Check irrigation system; consider drip

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Treat powdery mildew with spray of half milk, half water
- ✓ Attract Jays to eat caterpillars—nail up an empty shallow can near tomatoes, fill with unshelled raw peanuts
- ✓ Interplant herbs among vegetables to confuse pests

Edibles

- ✓ Thin fruit on deciduous fruit trees
- ✓ Plant melons, parsley
- ✓ Rotate crops
- ✓ Plant giant pumpkin (such as "Big Max") on mound with lots of compost

Ornamentals

- ✓ Tidy, divide, repot cymbidiums; give them some shade, water weekly, and feed monthly
- ✓ Remove seedpods from fortnight lilies but leave stems—they will rebloom
- ✓ Taper off water to local natives
- ✓ Prune winter and spring-flowering shrubs and vines after bloom

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

Facebook: Claremont Garden Club
Instagram: Claremont_Garden_Club