



Gardener's Notebook

Volume 18, No. 6

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

December 2004/January 2005

The Bay Area's best holiday plants and trees

If you're ready to decorate for the holidays, let us show you why our trees, greens, wreaths, poinsettias and other seasonal plants are the best quality you'll find anywhere in the Bay Area.

Finding a fresh, well-

shaped Christmas tree is easy at Sloat. We offer the **Noble Fir**, which

is known for its symmetrical shape, sturdy branches and

longevity. We insist that our noble firs are delivered the same week they are harvested

and then on arrival we quickly place them in water stands. (No wooden stands here.) The

result is an ultra fresh tree that looks great and lasts through the holidays.

The point we'd like to

make about our poinsettias is rather

poignant. It seems that most

other stores that offer poinsettias

haven't figured out that these

Mexican natives don't like



Seasons Greetings!

the cold. While you are sure to find poinsettias outside of your local drugstores and markets, our points are pampered indoors where they belong. We keep them well watered so they are in outstanding shape when you take them home. Selection is another reason to visit Sloat. Look for a variety of colors to match any decor including red, white,

pink, peach, cream and variegated.

Our holiday greenery will wow you, too.

Our **wreaths, boughs, garlands, and swags** are fresh from the Sierra and Cascades. Decorating your front door, mantel, table, and window sills is easy with our wide selection. (See our decorating and design seminars on page 4.)

Check our great gift ideas inside and you'll realize that a visit to Sloat this season will be a rewarding, stress-free and, yes, a fun way to shop for the holidays.

Pump up winter color with pansies, violas and primroses

If you'd like to show some color this winter you can hit the tanning salon or visit Sloat and pick up some pansies, violas and primroses.

The winter season unnecessarily challenges some gardeners as they assume that nothing can replace their free-flowering spring and summer annuals.

While it's true that there are

far fewer winter flowering annuals, there are some great performers that will get you through the next three or four months with flying colors.

Start with storm-proof **violas and pansies**. While you can't help but appreciate the color range and prolific bloom of

these two winter standouts, keep in mind that they can also take on some pretty severe weather and will bounce back quickly.

They are ideal for full sun locations in your garden and can be massed in beds, placed along borders and loaded into your favorite containers. They also make

an ideal spring bulb cover.

Primula is the perfect choice to replace impatiens. A little less durable than pansies and violas, these shade plants can take cover under trees and shrubs or under an overhang. Their lovely flower forms and attractive foliage offer very pleasing winter color with reds, yellows, violets, and more.

Please check with our expert staff to learn more about these plants and others that will keep your winter garden in bloom.



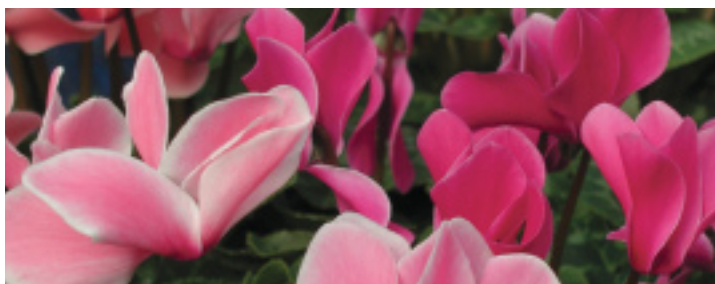
Cyclamen: Months of beautiful color for winter gardens

Winter can be prime time for many Mediterranean plants as they awaken from summer slumber and begin to grow and flower. Cyclamen are a beautiful example. This striking plant begins blooming in October and can continue its flower show through May provided the weather stays cool. That's an incredible eight months of continuous flowering!

A member of the primula family (although there is almost no resemblance save one species), cyclamen are a cool weather performer. They can brighten containers, fill beds with color, line walkways, surround fountains and other water

accents, bring color and beauty to shady areas and much more.

The genus includes 20 species of which



nearly all are found in the Mediterranean basin. *Cyclamen persicum* is the most well-known variety; most cyclamen found

in nurseries were hybridized from this species.

Rich color choices and interesting flower forms give gardeners some real flexibility when utilizing these plants in a garden design. There are red, pinks, maroon, and white varieties and miniatures, standards and some speciality varieties as well. Their variegated foliage is a great plus to the overall appeal of the plant.

Cyclamen are easy to grow and relatively disease-free. They prefer light shade and are well-suited for planting under trees and shrubs, which help remove excess water from their growing environment.

They are tolerant of many soil types but grow best in a well-draining medium. Plant them high so the tuber peeks above the surface (do not cover it).

Overwatering is the biggest threat to your cyclamen. They appreciate a good watering but will rot if the soil doesn't drain. Let the soil become nearly dry between waterings.

When you consider that a single cyclamen corm may produce well over 100 flowers, you might want to keep them on your holiday list and move them near the top of your winter garden plant list, too.



Our wonderful rhododendrons are ready to plant now!

Rhododendrons are truly at home in the Bay Area and offer gardeners big beautiful flowers on an easy to grow plant. "Rhodies" grow best in filtered shade under a canopy of trees.

To learn more about adding these spectacular plants to your garden, see us soon.

Gardening Guide

December & January

Plant



Neptune

Now's the time to choose from a super selection of dormant roses so you can bank on a beautiful spring and summer rose garden. (See page 3.)

Choose an ultra-fresh Christmas tree and consider Sloat's wonderful collection of holiday plants to decorate your home.

Plant trees now to help them get established. For a more mature tree, try one that is "balled-and-burlapped."

Plant winter color now including cyclamen, pansies, violas, and primula.

Fertilize

Feed trees and shrubs that are susceptible to fungal attacks with a fertilizer such as **Greenall Wintergreen**.

Prune/Maintain

Apply dormant sprays and horticultural oils to deciduous trees (including fruit), and to roses to avoid overwintering pests and diseases. (See article on page 6.)

Winter is a great time to prune and clean up your garden. (See pruning information on page 3.)



Plant

Sloat's fruit trees arrive at our Novato and Danville stores in January. Select and plant a peach, apricot, apple, pear, cherry or other variety.

Continue planting roses and winter annuals.

Plant berries including blueberries and blackberries.

Fertilize

Topdress roses and other tender plants with **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** to conserve water and help minimize frost damage.

Prune/Maintain

Prune frost-hardy evergreen shrubs and trees. Giving them the proper shape and size will accommodate new growth and help prevent winter damage.

Cut back your perennials and ornamental grasses.

Continue to clean up winter debris.

Weeds that start with winter rains go to seed in March and April. Pulling weeds now before they go to seed is well

worth the effort and will significantly cut down on their appearance in your garden.

Also use a pre-emergent to stop weeds from germinating.

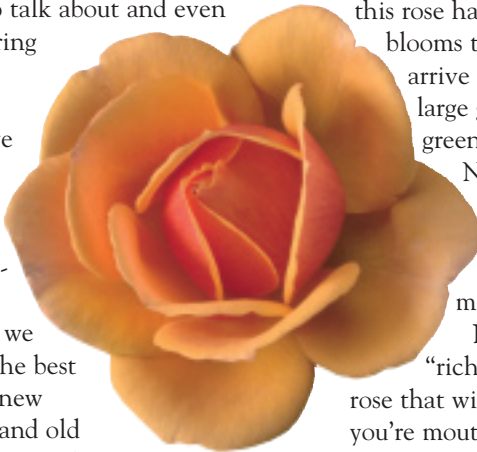
Now is a good time to remove any plants that do not appear to be doing well in your garden. Divide and thin plants that have become overgrown.

Talk about some beautiful new roses for 2005

Perhaps you haven't heard what happened when Sexy Remy was crossed with Dawn Chorus over in Ireland, but the result was not Lasting Love. Fortunately the result was something equally special!

Rose planting season is here again and with it some exciting new introductions that are fun to talk about and even more fun to bring home to your garden.

Each year we review the offerings from the world's top roses growers and put together what we feel is one of the best collections of new introductions and old favorites in the Bay Area.



This year we have selected roses from Weeks Roses, a grower

with over 60 years of experience, some

250 rose varieties under cultivation and a

reputation for very consistent quality. Weeks' research department hand-pollinates 50,000 flowers each year to produce 250,000 seeds as part of an 8-10 year process to produce a just a handful of award winning roses!

About Face is one of their winners and heads our list of four 2005 introductions. This grandiflora is winner of the **All American Rose Selection** award and features an inside-out bi-color combination. The inside of the flower petals is a deep golden yellow while the outside is a darker bronzy orange-red. Certainly the opposite of what is commonly found in bi-colored roses. A vigorous-growing rose with excellent disease resistance, it's beauty and great attributes are what put a medal on the shelf at Weeks headquarters. The name, About Face, really fits and it

will turn your head, too.

Check out **Neptune**, our second new introduction, if you love lavender with a hint of purple and a strong rose scent. (A picture is shown in our Gardening Guide.) Destined for greatness (and awards) this rose has abundant

blooms that arrive atop large glossy green leaves.

Neptune is a hybrid tea rose that is hardier and more disease-resistant than many other lavender roses.

Lasting Love is described as "richly fragrant" and a dusky red rose that will "overpower your senses." If you're mouthing the words "bring it on" then we're all on the same page! This



hybrid tea has large 5-inch diameter flowers, dark, green glossy foliage and stems that are ideal for cutting. With good disease resistance we can all find room for this rose in our gardens.

Finally, when you cross Sexy Remy with Dawn Chorus, you end up with a very unusual floribunda called

Lime Sublime. Its greenish yellow buds open white and are accented by very dark green leaves. It will light up your landscape with copious amounts of luminous blooms. Lime Sublime is great for mass plantings and mixed borders.

These new introductions along with a great collection of other Weeks bareroot roses have been planted up in containers by Monrovia for Sloat. They're ready for your garden now. Plant them today and watch them bloom this spring.

Winter pruning time for trees, shrubs and more.

After the leaves of your deciduous plants and trees have hit the ground, it's time to pick up your pruning tools!

Winter is the time for removing dead wood, managing growth, shaping and training, rejuvenating slow-growth, day-lighting, cutting away diseased wood, and more.

A great many trees and shrubs are best pruned when they are dormant, which is typically November through February. While trees are dormant, so are the pests and disease that might attack a pruning wound. In addition, with leaves of deciduous plants and trees out of the way it is easier to see branching structure and make accurate cuts.

Winter pruning is an important skill for all gardeners. It's an art and a science, and can truly enhance the health and beauty of

your garden.

Before pruning you should consult some plant-specific literature, which is

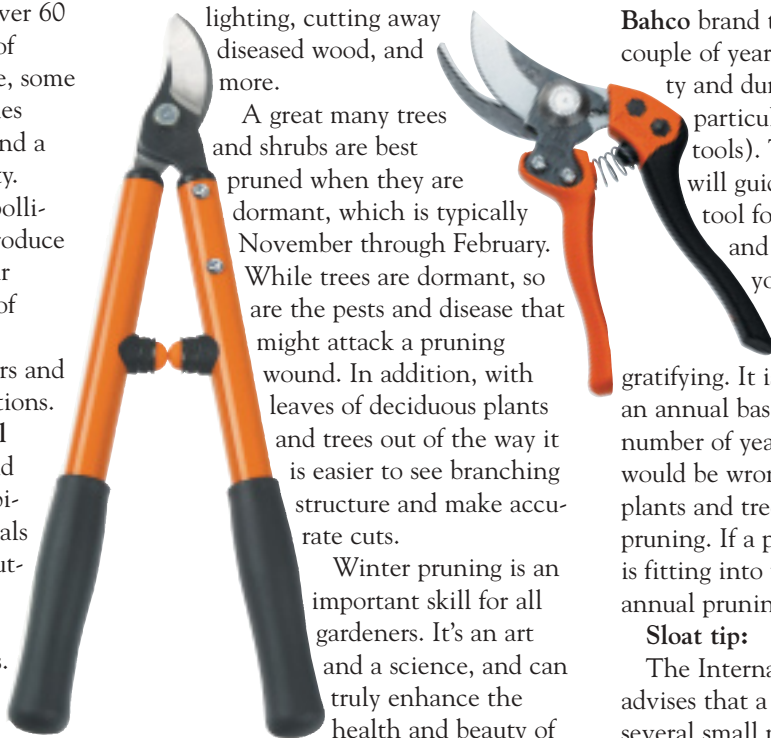
readily available in books and on the internet, and/or attend one of our pruning seminars (see seminar listings).

Four key tools that you'll need are a **hand pruner, shears, lopper** and **saw**. Each tool serves a specific function. The **Bahco** brand tools that we introduced a couple of years ago offer incredible quality and durability (something that is particularly important with cutting tools). The Bahco product labels will guide you in choosing the right tool for various branch diameters and our expert staff can assist you as well.

Pruning is not very complicated and can be quite gratifying. It is often best if you do it on an annual basis as opposed to waiting a number of years between prunings. It would be wrong, however, to say that all plants and trees benefit from annual pruning. If a plant or tree is healthy and is fitting into your landscape, then an annual pruning may not be required.

Sloat tip:

The International Arborist Society advises that a tree can recover from several small pruning wounds faster than one large wound. So when in doubt, make conservative cuts!

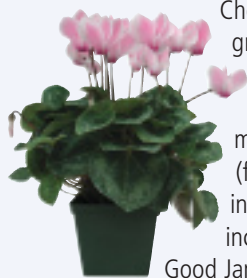


Special Offers for Gardener's Reward Members

Coupons good January 1 thru February 1, 2005

Beautiful Cyclamen Save 20%

Fill your garden beds, containers, and more with dependable winter color.



Choose from our great selection of cyclamen standards and miniatures (fancies not included). Four-inch specimens.

Good January 1 to February 1, 2005.

Reg. \$4.99. **Special \$3.99**

Superior Rose & Flower Care Save 30%

Bayer Advanced Garden 2-in-1 Systemic Rose and Flower Care



This product does a great job of feeding and protecting your roses against insects for up to 6 weeks. Try this large, 5-pound container. Good January 1 to February 1, 2005.

Reg. \$9.99 **Special \$6.99**

Essential Dormant Spray Save 30%

Lilly Miller Poly-Sol

Control over-wintering pests and diseases on your deciduous trees and shrubs. Ideal for your favorite fruit and ornamental trees and roses. Good January 1 to February 1, 2005

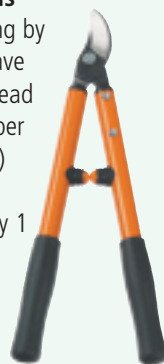


Reg. \$9.99. **Special \$6.99**

Top Quality Pruning Tools Save 30%

Bahco Pruning Tools

Simplify winter pruning by using quality tools. Save 30% on our Bahco Head Shears ((P5925), Lopper (PSL45), Saw, (JT-396) and all Bahco hand-pruners. Good January 1 to February 1, 2005



Great Plant Protection Save 35%

Cloud Cover



This popular spray will help prevent your plants from dehydrating during freezing weather. It is easy to use and will pay for itself by protecting your cold-sensitive plants when the inevitable cold snaps hit. Good January 1 to February 1, 2005.

Reg. \$8.99. **Special \$5.99**

Sloat Forest Mulch Plus Reg. \$6.99 Special \$4.99



Sloat's Forest Mulch Plus can offer your plants great protection from both cold and heat by providing an important insulating blanket for roots. It also has a powerful soil enhancer which provides nutrients for plant growth. This offer is good on our 2 cubic foot bags. Good January 1 to February 1, 2005.

SLOAT SEMINARS

Attendance is limited. Please call ahead to the seminar location to reserve a seat. Seminar fee is \$5. (Gardener's Reward Program members are free.)

Indoor Plant Design

Interior and floral designer Cara Barnard will demonstrate ways to brighten up your home for the holidays using indoor plants.

Dec. 5 - S.F. (Third Ave.), Sun., 10 a.m.

How to Rebloom Orchids

Glenn Smith, of the Marin Orchid Society, will explain winter care and feeding to help ensure your orchids rebloom.

Dec. 8 - Mill Valley (Blithedale), Wed. 5:30 p.m.

Dec. 12 - Sonoma, Sun., 10 a.m.

Dec. 15 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 p.m.

Tree Pruning

Good pruning keeps trees healthy and productive. S.F. instructor Robert Broucayet will offer pruning techniques to keep your trees looking great!

Dec. 8 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 p.m.

Holiday Plant Decorating

Sloat's staff will demonstrate great ways to beautify your home for the holidays.

Dec. 18 - Danville, Sat., 10 a.m.

Rose Pruning

Learning to prune your roses is essential to maintaining their health and beauty. Join members of the S.F. and Marin Rose Societies or Sloat's Sara Rey or Richard Avery to learn this important skill.

Jan. 5 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), SFRS Wed., 5:30 p.m.

Jan. 8 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), MRS Sat., 10 a.m.

Jan. 9 - Sonoma, Sara Rey Sun., 10 a.m.

Jan. 9 - Novato, MRS Sun., 10 a.m.

Jan. 15 - Kentfield, MRS Sat., 10 a.m.

Jan. 15 - Danville, Richard Avery Sat., 10 a.m.

Jan. 22 - San Rafael, MRS Sat., 10 a.m.

Jan. 23 - S.F. (Third Ave.), SFRS Sun., 10 a.m.

Jan. 30 - Larkspur, MRS Sun., 10 a.m.

Japanese Maple Pruning

Arborist Julie Gates will demonstrate pruning techniques for Japanese maples to accentuate their naturally graceful form.

Jan. 8 - San Rafael, Sat., 10 a.m.

Jan. 9 - Mill Valley (E. Blithedale), Sun., 10 a.m.

Jan. 16 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sun., 10 a.m.

Jan. 29 - Kentfield, Sat., 10 a.m.

Garden Design Do's and Don'ts

Sloat's Dustin Strobel, C.C.N.P., will show how to achieve harmony and order in your garden while avoiding common pitfalls.

Jan. 19 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 p.m.

Spectacular Winter Containers

Discover how to maximize color in winter gardens using our unique pottery and great plant selection with Sloat's Dinah Sims.

Jan. 16 - Larkspur, Sat., 10 a.m.

Helpful Houseplant Care

Sloat's Dinah Sims will reveal the secrets to healthy, robust houseplants.

Jan. 23 - Sonoma, Sat., 10 a.m.

SLOAT GARDEN CENTER'S
Holiday Gift Guide



ROSES



GARDEN ART



UNIQUE
POTTERY



HOLIDAY
PLANTS



WIND
CHIMES



GARDEN
TOOLS



CITRUS &
FRUIT
TREES



BOOKS



GARDENER'S
HELPERS



GIVE THE GIFT OF
GREAT GARDEN DESIGN

If you are looking for an original gift that is sure to please any gardener, consider a garden design consultation. Sloat's Garden Design Department offers hourly consultations to Marin and San Francisco residents to help create beautiful gardens, identify mystery plants, troubleshoot problems, and much more. Consultation customers receive a 10% off coupon good for one year on all plants and materials!

For more information call 388-3754.



Garden Gift Collections!

Choose one of our gift collections or assemble your own!

This year we've put together a number of special and original gift collections for you to consider. You'll find the three shown here plus others that have been created by our staff.

From a Jiffy Easy-grow Greenhouse with seeds and soil to a lovely Designs in Copper Hummingbird Feeder with Nectar Mix, you just can't go wrong with our gift collections!



Glazed pot, West County gloves, transplanter, trowel, cultivator, Good bug-bad bug chart.



Duncraft Birdfeeder, bird seed and local bird chart.



Terra-cotta pot, Edna's Best Potting Soil, California poppy seeds.

Ten Locations in San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma & Contra Costa

Richmond District
3rd Avenue between
Geary & Clement
752-1614

Sunset District
2700 Sloat Blvd.
46th & Sloat Blvd.
566-4415

Novato
2000 Novato Blvd. at
Wilson
897-2169

San Rafael
1580 Lincoln Ave.
just off Hwy. 101
453-3977

Larkspur
279 Doherty Drive between
Redwood H.S. & Magnolia
924-7390

Kentfield
700 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
at Wolfe Grade
454-0262

Mill Valley
657 E. Blithedale at Lomita
388-0102

401 Miller Ave. at La Goma
388-0365

Sonoma
23566 Arnold Drive
(707) 939-9400

Danville
828 Diablo Road
(925) 743-0288

**Garden Design
Department**
401 Miller, Mill Valley
388-3754

Visit Sloat on the Web: www.sloatgardens.com

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Great plants and great advice to help them grow!

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Treat your sleeping trees and shrubs with dormant sprays

Dormant sprays will not help your plants have a restful winter slumber, but they will allow them to wake and grow come spring without being damaged by pests and diseases!

Dormant sprays are fine oils or fungicides that should be applied to many deciduous trees and shrubs during the winter months. They offer an effective and economical treatment for over-wintering pests and diseases that commonly plague fruit and ornamental trees as well as roses each spring.

From peach leaf curl on nectarines and peaches to serious damage caused by overwintering mites, aphids and scale, dormant sprays represent the proverbial ounce of prevention that's worth the pound of cure.

Plan on two or three applications spread over the dormant period. The sprays and oils are best applied with a pump sprayer, which is easy to use and

inexpensive. Gardeners should begin spraying once the leaves have dropped from their plants and conclude their treatments in spring prior to any buds opening.

Three products with some overlapping capabilities to consider are **Lily Miller Polysul**, **Cooke Kop-R-Spray** and **Farnam Ultra-Fine Oil**.

Lilly Miller Polysul and Cooke Kop-R-Spray are best for treating and controlling

diseases while Farbam Ultra-Fine Oil is a natural and effective remedy for dealing with over-wintering insect eggs such as aphids and mites.

If you use dormant sprays this winter, you'll find that a few ounces of prevention will not only be worth a pound of cure, but a few pounds of ripe delicious fruit, a few thousand gorgeous cherry blossoms and some very healthy rose bushes.

Time to add a tree to your garden

Winter is the time to add a new tree to your garden. Planting now allows roots to get established before next spring's above ground growth.

Sloat's collection of "B&B" dogwoods, magnolias and maples has just arrived and our fruit trees are due in January.

Balled and Burlapped (B&B) trees are grown in the

ground, dug out and their rootballs wrapped in burlap. "B&B" trees are typically more mature than container-grown trees.

Adding trees to your landscape is exciting and can have a dramatic effect. Please consult with our staff for guidance on varieties, mature height, care, planting tips and more.

Note: Japanese maples will be limited this year so shop early.



About this Newsletter: The Gardener's Notebook is published bimonthly by Sloat Garden Center for the education and enjoyment of Bay Area gardeners. Information is collected from Sloat's expert staff, current horticultural publications and Sunser's Western Garden Book. Send address corrections to: 420 Coloma Street, Sausalito, CA 94965.