

S l o a t



# Gardener's Notebook

Volume 20, No. 3

*News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners*

May/June 2006

## SPRINGTIME GARDENING



Butterfly Gardens   Banana Trees   Container Recipes   San Bruno Opens & more!

# Butterfly Gardening for the Bay Area:

## An Interview with Mary Te Selle of Quite Contrary Gardening



Frittillary on Zinnia

Over lattes at Royal Grounds in San Rafael we learned the ins and outs of Butterfly Gardening from Mary Te Selle, the award-winning garden designer of Quite Contrary Gardening

How did you become interested in butterfly gardening?

My grandmother had silkworms and as a child I remember feeding them mulberry leaves and watching them grow – they get so big and fluffy that you can even pet them! I also grew up in the Pacific Grove area where the monarchs visit in the fall – so I guess butterflies have always been a part of my gardening world.

What are the most common types of butterflies in the Bay Area?

There are at least 30 species of butterflies common to our area. For instance, monarchs, swallowtails, and checker spots. I keep a Butterfly Guide by my dining room window so that I can easily identify all the varieties that visit my gardens.

When creating a butterfly-friendly garden, what are the necessary components?



Painted Lady on Coreopsis

The essential ingredients are a sunny warm area that is protected from the wind and

preferably not in high traffic areas for pets & children. When creating a butterfly-friendly environment it is important to give yourself permission not to clean; butterflies are attracted to undisturbed and native habitats like meadows.

Very few Northern California gardens have meadow-like spaces so how can we incorporate that into our smaller spaces?

When you are creating a butterfly garden, the first thing you should appreciate is that you are designing an esthetically pleasing view for you, and a nectar-rich habitat for them. Basically, butterflies are never going to say “Oh another lavender – that was so last season!” So remember to keep a balance; you don’t need exotic or difficult-to-care-for plants.

Can you give us some ideas for creating a container garden that would attract butterflies?

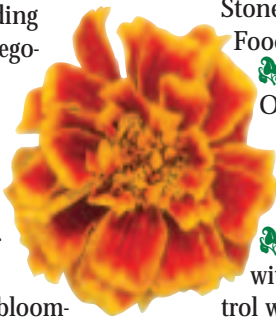
Absolutely! There are so many options. Start with a Buddleia (Butterfly Bush) for stature with small annuals like cosmos and then some

### Gardening Guide

#### May

##### PLANT

- 🌿 Plant annuals including impatiens, marigolds, begonias, vincas, coleus and other spring and summer bloomers.
- 🌿 Good time to plant pumpkins, squash, sunflowers, and melons for fall color.
- 🌿 Select garden-ready blooming roses and perennials.



- 🌿 Give vegetables a boost with E.B. Stone Organics Tomato and Vegetable Food.
- 🌿 Use a time-release fertilizer such as Osmocote for your container plants.

##### PRUNE/MAINTAIN

- 🌿 Prune spring-flowering shrubs after bloom is past.
- 🌿 Mulch vegetable and flower beds with Sloat Forest Mulch Plus to control weeds and conserve moisture.
- 🌿 Freshen up containers and replace spent cooler-weather annuals with blooming 4-inch perennials such as verbena, calibrachoa, bacopa, and ipomoea.
- 🌿 Release ladybugs and other beneficial insects to help control aphids, mites, whiteflies, and other garden pests.

##### FERTILIZE

- 🌿 Feed your lawn with Nature’s Green Lawn Food.
- 🌿 Fertilize rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias with E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food.

#### June

##### PLANT

- 🌿 Warm season annuals abound. Plant vinca, salvias, cosmos, lisianthus, portulaca and more.
- 🌿 Plant herbs in pots for use in the kitchen.

##### FERTILIZE

- 🌿 Your spring plantings are probably getting hungry. Feed with all-purpose fertilizers such as EB Stone Organics and Maxsea.
- 🌿 Feed your lawn with high nitrogen fertilizer like Nature’s Green Lawn Food.



##### PRUNE/MAINTAIN

- 🌿 Continue to deadhead roses, shrubs and other flowers to encourage new blooms with a new pair of Felco pruners.
- 🌿 Mulch shrubs and beds to conserve moisture. Try GreenAll Microbark for its beauty and utility.
- 🌿 Make sure vegetables are supported with cages, stakes, or trellises.
- 🌿 Check early-bearing fruit trees for heavily laden branches. Support or thin trees now to prevent branches from breaking.

parsley and chives as host plants. Herbs are great host plants and are easy to grow and delicious for cooking too! Another container option would be a Meyer Lemon tree with allysum and fennel.

That brings up a good question. I have heard a lot about nectar plants and host plants. Are they the same?

Some plants serve as both nectar-rich and host plants. The difference being the time in the life cycle when the butterflies feed on the plants. Host plants supply nourishment for



Monarch on Lavender

caterpillars while the adult butterflies feed from the nectar-rich plants. So remember not to be upset if you see some caterpillar damage on your host plants because it is a sign that you have butterflies on the way!

Lastly, is there a universal butterfly plant or does each variety of butterfly prefer a different plant?

There are a few that seem to serve as "butterfly magnets" like the Buddleia and the Lantana. Some of my personal favorites are Nicotiana, Agastache, Dianthus, Sedum Autumn Joy and Tithonia.

*Make sure to sign up for Mary's seminars at Sloat on Butterfly Gardening this Spring! For more information on Mary please visit her website: [www.quitecontrarygardening.com](http://www.quitecontrarygardening.com)*



Western Tiger Swallowtail on Buddleia

## SLOAT SEMINARS

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

### CLEMATIS - CONTAINERS & SMALL GARDENS

Ray Evison, author of "The Gardener's Guide to Growing Clematis" and founder of the International Clematis Society, will share secrets for using these "social climbers" in containers and small gardens.

May 3 - Kentfield, 11 a.m.

May 3 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), 6:30 p.m.

### MAKING THE SWITCH TO NATURAL GARDENING

Techniques to keep your garden pet-friendly & chemical-free, from Annie Joseph, Natural Gardening Specialist.

May 7 - Danville, Sun., 10 a.m.

May 17 - Kentfield, Wed., 11 a.m.

May 17 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 6:30 p.m.

May 24 - Novato, Wed., 6:30 p.m.

### BUTTERFLY GARDENING

Attract these lovely pollinators to your garden with great design suggestions from Mary Te Selle, of Quite Contrary Gardening.

May 10 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 6:30 p.m.

May 13 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sat., 10 a.m.

May 17 - Novato, Wed., 6:30 p.m.

### PRUNING AZALEAS, CAMELLIAS, & RHODODENDRONS

Keep your shrubs happy & well behaved - Arborist Marie Miller will explain the "why's and where's" of spring pruning.

May 7 - San Rafael, Sun., 10 a.m.

May 28 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sun., 10 a.m.

June 25 - Novato, Sun., 10 a.m.

June 28 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 6:30 p.m.

### SPRING PRUNING FOR JAPANESE MAPLES

Learn the next step in maintaining your Japanese Maple from Julie Gates, Certified Arborist.

May 21 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sun., 10 a.m.

May 27 - San Rafael, Sat., 10 a.m.

May 31 - Kentfield, Wed., 6:30 p.m.

### PRUNING FLOWERING PERENNIALS

Rejuvenate your perennials for spring and encourage flower production. Arborist Marie Miller will demonstrate the pruning of lavender, salvias, etc.

May 24 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 6:30 p.m.

### ORCHID BASICS

Glenn Smith (Marin Orchid Society.) shares when to feed and water these exotic lovelies and how and when to repot mature plants.

June 3 - Danville, Sat., 10 a.m.

June 11 - Sonoma, Sun., 11 a.m.

June 14 - Novato, Wed., 6:30 p.m.

June 21 - Kentfield, Wed., 6:30 p.m.

### BONSAI FOR BEGINNERS

Daryl Quijano (Bonsai Soc. of SF) demonstrates how to start your first tree, and the basics of bonsai.

June 7 - S.F.

(Sloat Blvd.) Wed., 6:30 p.m.

June 17 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.) Sat., 10 a.m.



www.bssf.org

## ENTICE BUTTERFLIES WITH THESE PLANT VARIETIES

### PERENNIALS & ANNUALS

Buddleia	Cosmos
Agastache	Tithonia
Nicotiana	Fuchsia
Sage	Zinnia
Lavender	Dianthus



Petite Butterflies Sweet Pea Bush

### TREES & SHRUBS

Sweet Pea Bush	Lantana
Privet	Blackberry
Plumbago	Willows
Honeysuckle	Lilac



Teenie Geenie Compact Lantana



# MONKEY BUSINESS: AN ADVENTURE IN BANANA TREES

Have you ever considered adding a gorgeous banana plant to your garden?

These large-leafed perennials are a fantastic gardening adventure that can offer both ornamental beauty and edible fruit. As you might imagine, a fruiting banana plant in the garden also makes quite a conversation piece!

Bananas and plantains belong to the Musaceae family. This family is known for its large, tree-like growth habit and flowers that are surrounded by distinctive bracts. Edible bananas originated in Asia and now grow in the wild all over the world and maybe in your backyard! The banana varieties we offer are cold hardy and produce a starchy fruit - not your average supermarket variety but still delicious!

When introducing bananas to your garden, you'll need to find a place with full sun exposure. While most of our featured varieties are wind and cool-weather tolerant, the best bet in north-



Dwarf Orinoco

ern California is in a sunny, sheltered area. It's also a great idea to plant it near a building or wall where heat can be reflected onto the plant.

Bananas prefer well-draining soil, but can actually tolerate a variety of soil conditions. This should come as no surprise when you consider how successfully they have been grown around the world. Bananas prefer regular watering and feeding during their growing season. A water-soluble fertilizer such as Maxsea is a good choice for this plant.

According to our grower, Monterey

Bay Nursery, warmer areas will probably grow sweeter fruit, but if you are in a cooler area than the Central Valley or Southern California, don't give up hope! In consumer testing in Australia, color was better on fruit from Sydney (subtropical, warmer than San Diego) but flavor was better from near Melbourne (more temperate, cooler than Modesto). But please be aware that producing fruit can take over a year from the time you plant a banana tree and even then your banana tree might never give you fruit. The good news is that these plants make exquisite ornamentals and are guaranteed to add a tropical appearance to your garden or porch!

Here are some of the varieties we will have available for your backyard plantation: .

### **DWARF NAMWAH**

This is the lady-like variety of the bunch - known for it's ladyfinger sweet bananas that grow in large clusters. A drought-resistant option, these trees will only grow to be about 8' tall.

### **DWARF ORINOCO**

Probably the best cold-tolerant fruiting banana, this variety almost always fruits by the time it reaches 6-7' tall. Reported to be quite shade-tolerant, this plantain hybrid was first found growing along the Orinoco River in Venezuela but is originally from India. With this variety it is important to remember to let the bananas turn slightly yellow before being removed from the stalk to ensure a sweet fruit.

### **ICE CREAM**

Just like the name implies this silvery blue green fruit tastes like ice cream - yum! This cold hardy variety is "choke resistant" meaning that if the tree's middle tissue closes down due to cold weather the new growth will not be constricted. It is the largest of our featured varieties and can reach up to 18'



Manzano

with a stout trunk and silvery leaves.

### **MANZANO**

This variety is recommended for northern California as it is cold-hardy and has proven to be wind-tolerant. The fruit may have a slightly acidic taste similar to apples, hence its name, which is Spanish for apple. The young leaves of this plant are vibrantly splashed with red, which is exquisite against its powdery white-coated trunk.

As you can tell we are really excited about all the wonderful varieties our grower has ready for you this year and we look forward to introducing them to you. You can also learn more about bananas from our grower at [www.montereybaynsy.com](http://www.montereybaynsy.com).

*Attention Danville Customers - Bananas are tropical plants that are frost tender & will need extra protection in your local area.*



Dwarf Orinoco

# NEW Spring Garden Essentials

## Imagine 20 Years Without Weeds

Think we're crazy? Well, 20-Year Weed-Shield is the ultimate Landscape Fabric. Rated #1 for stopping weeds by 8 independent university studies! Weed Shield has the ability to stop annoying weeds while still allowing air, water and nutrients to pass through. This patented fabric comes with the industry's only 20-Year Money-Back Weed-Free Guarantee!



## Earth Friendly Containers are Here

IT'S TRUE!!!! EcoForms, Earth friendly containers for a sustainable world, are made from renewable grain husks and natural binding agents. They are long-lasting, and can replace all your plastic planting pots. EcoForms are lightweight and durable, lasting five years under normal usage. Available in a variety of styles, shapes, sizes and earth tone colors. Finally, we have an attractive, guilt-free, alternative to plastic planting pots! Use them for all your planting needs and when you're through, throw them away and they will decompose. What more could you want?



## Cut Your Watering by Half - Amazing!

Zeba's Quench cuts your watering in half by creating a natural water reservoir in your garden. Unlike the existing petroleum-based products, Quench will easily release 95% of water back to the plant. Quench holds moisture in the root zone so that the plant has access to it when it needs it.



Quench is ideal for all types of plantings, both indoors and outdoors, and is perfect for small gardens, hanging baskets and patio containers

## Organic Plant Protection Against Deer

How many times have you spent a weekend planting gorgeous plants only to find them devoured weeks later? Sharing our gardens with deer has always meant looking over our shoulders for our foraging friends. No longer! Now there is an organic solution that promises to protect your garden from the damaging effects of hungry deer - Deer Scram! With 100% organic ingredients this product is safe for use around pets, children, and even your vegetable garden.



## THUMBELINA LEIGH ENGLISH LAVENDER



Did you know that the name Lavender comes from the Latin verb lavo - to wash, because the Romans used lavender in their baths

to scent the water and restore the skin?

Did you know that French lavender is not native to France but instead to Spain, Greece and North Africa?

Did you know that lavender aroma is known to alleviate headaches?

This hardy yet beautiful plant has been used in aromatherapy for centuries and is a great addition to any

northern California garden. This spring we are excited to introduce a new species from Monrovia, Thumbelina Leigh English Lavender. This variety is considered incredibly cold-hardy and has been known to produce the sweetest of all lavender oils.

Perfect for container gardening, dry slopes, banks and rock gardens this small lavender is essential for any Mediterranean-style garden.

According to our grower, Monrovia, this lavender will produce aromatic bright blue-violet flowers 3 times per year when pruned by half after each flowering.

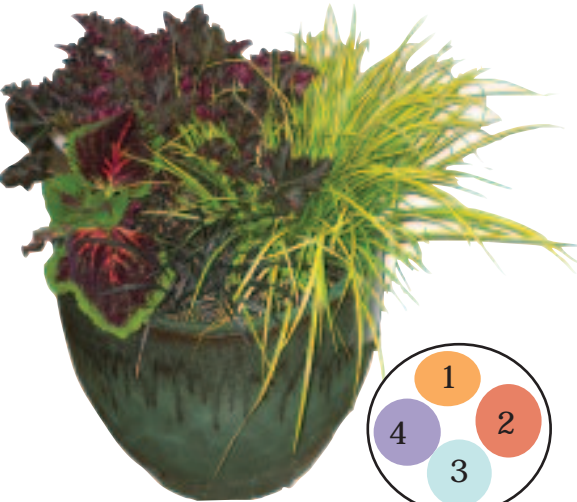
Never pruned a lavender? You can learn the secrets of pruning from aesthetic pruner Marie Miller at her May 24th Seminar at our Sloat Blvd location. (Check our seminar listing on page 3)



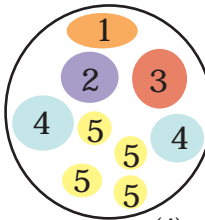
**MONROVIA**  
HORTICULTURAL CRAFTSMEN SINCE 1926

# Introducing our Spring Garden Pottery

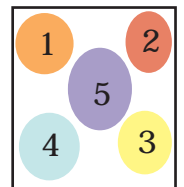
Container gardening is a great way to spruce up a porch, walkway, or outdoor entertaining area. For spring we are featuring three exquisite and easy container ideas using our new pottery from a small factory in Southern China. The vibrantly colored pottery, available in red wine, blue, black, and green, was discovered at the Canton Trade Fair this past fall. With so many styles and sizes, there is a pot for all of the container gardens you can imagine!



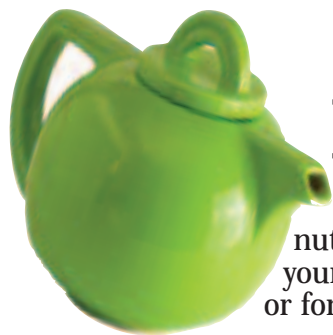
- (1) *Acorus graminus* 'Ogon', Golden Variegated Sweet Flag
- (2) *Ophiopogon* 'Nigrascens', Black Mondo Grass
- (3) *Coleus Hybridus*
- (4) *Heuchera* 'Crimson Curls'



- (1) *Luzula sylvatica* 'Aurea' Cape Rush
- (2) *Chondropetalum tectorum*, Meyer's Asparagus Fern
- (3) *Meyer's Asparagus Fern*
- (4) *Festuca* 'Elijah Blue'
- (5) *Heuchera* 'Marmalade'



- (1) *Carex morrowii* 'Aureovariega', Variegated Japanese Sedge
- (2) *Sedum* 'Dragon's Blood'
- (3) *Helichrysum* 'Limelight'
- (4) *Crassula*
- (5) *Phormium* 'Jester'



## It's Tea Time for your Plants

Worm tea has been proven to protect against disease, assist in the production of highly nutritious and healthy fruits and vegetables and increase the quality of your soil and all your plants. Our Recipe for worm tea is great for both indoor and outdoor container plants or for plants in the ground.

### INGREDIENTS

- E.B. Stone Organics All Purpose Plant Food
- E.B. Stone Earthworm Castings
- 2 Gallons of water

### DIRECTIONS

1. Mix 1 cup E.B. Stone Organics All Purpose Plant Food & 1 cup E.B. Stone Earthworm Castings with 2 Gallons of water.
2. Let sit for 24 hours.
3. Stir well and water plants.



For broader application or quick greening, pour strained tea into sprayer and apply to plant leaves. Use residue as mulch around outdoor plants.

# San Bruno Opens with Sunshine!

With over 40 years of experience in the garden industry we are ecstatic to open our newest store in San Bruno! Located at 675 El Camino Real, the store is gorgeous!

Our grand opening celebration on April 1st & 2nd included a ribbon cutting ceremony with the Mayor and Assistant Mayor of San Bruno, many members of the Chamber of Commerce, representatives from the Samaritan House, and of course our fantastic San Bruno team. With the store officially open we celebrated with a live broadcast by



Sue Hall of KFRC, hanging basket demonstrations, and even a ladybug give-away! This wonderful weekend also benefited the Samaritan House. With over 31 years of "neighbor helping neighbor" this local charity organization is a

leader in breaking the cycle of poverty in San Mateo County. The San Bruno store will be donating 10% of its grand opening weekend sales to the Samaritan House's vegetable garden & beautification projects.

*Please visit us in San Bruno!*

## MEET OUR NEW SAN BRUNO MANAGEMENT TEAM



### Richard Avery, Manager

#### SPECIAL INTERESTS

Vegetable Gardening  
Drought Tolerant Plants  
Photography & Hiking Muir Woods

#### EXPERIENCE

Sloat Professional 4 years  
California & New Mexico Certified Nursery Professional  
Over 35 years Nursery Experience

#### GARDENING TIP:

Have what you like & make your garden personal!

### Charlie Paulson, Asst .Mgr

#### SPECIAL INTERESTS

Carnivorous Plants  
Urban Experimental Gardening  
Creating Tropical Sanctuaries  
Video Gaming

#### EXPERIENCE

Sloat Professional 4 years  
California Certified Nursery Professional

#### GARDENING TIP:

-Don't be afraid to prune your plants, it helps more than it hurts - everybody needs a haircut!

### Sara Willard, Bedding Buyer

#### SPECIAL INTERESTS

Topiaries & Bonsai  
English & Japanese Gardens  
Photography & Antiquing

#### EXPERIENCE

Sloat Professional 4 years  
5 years of Bedding Buyer Experience

#### GARDENING TIP:

Know your sunlight & don't fight your space! Everyone has choices when they know what they can grow with ease in their space.

## THRIPS: Catch these Garden Menaces Early



### Do your plants look like this?

Then you may have thrips! Thrips attack the areas of a shady garden when it begins to dry in spring or summer. It is not always obvious that thrips are the cause of the plant deterioration but there are some key symptoms you can look for. These tiny insects scar the leaves, flowers, and stalks by sucking the surface of the plant.

Thrips signature stippling, or tiny scars, result in papery and discolored leaves. If the thrip infestation is not eradicated the leaves and flowers will prematurely drop. Thrips have also been known to feed on roses resulting in "color break", discoloration of the petals, a tell-tale sign that these tiny pests have been feeding on the buds

To control and exterminate thrips we recommend two Bayer products:

### Bayer 2 in 1 Systemic Rose & Flower Care



The ready to use granules of this product are absorbed by roots. Rain and regular watering will not reduce the effectiveness and even new growth is protected against insects and thrips.

### Bayer All-In-One Rose and Flower Care

This concentrated product impacts the entire plant. Even new growth is fed and protected against insects and disease. Rain or regular watering will not wash off this long-lasting protection.



Another option is the ever popular organic **Bonide All Seasons Spray Oil** that asphyxiates the thrips with horticultural oil.

## Locations in San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma, Contra Costa & San Mateo

### Richmond District

327 3rd Avenue  
(415) 752-1614

### Sunset District

2700 Sloat Blvd.  
46th & Sloat Blvd.  
(415) 566-4415

### San Bruno

675 Camino Real  
(650) 869-6000

### Novato

2000 Novato Blvd. at  
Wilson  
(415) 897-2169

### San Rafael

1580 Lincoln Ave. just off  
Hwy. 101  
(415) 453-3977

### Mill Valley

657 E. Blithedale at Lomita  
(415) 388-0102  
401 Miller Ave. at La Goma  
(415) 388-0365

### Kentfield

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

### 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](http://www.sloatgardens.com)

Open 7 days a week - 8:30 am to 6:30 pm

Danville- Sunday 9:00 to 5:00  
Sonoma- 9:00 to 5:30 (everyday)



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## Great plants and great advice to help them grow!

8 SLOAT NOTEBOOK May/June 2006

## Congratulations to the winners of our 2<sup>nd</sup> Gardener's Reward Sweepstakes Drawing!

### Grand Prize - \$500 Gift Card



ANKE BETIC

*will continue to nurture and expand her Terra Linda garden with drought-tolerant plants and beautiful flowers. We can't wait to hear about all her landscape designs!*

Sloat's Gardener's Reward Program has been a huge success and now has over 80,000 Bay Area members!

Along with our year-end Gardener's Reward Saving Certificate, we included a chance to win a number of great prizes. Here's a partial list of recent winners:

**\$500 Gift Card** - Anke Betic

**Orchid a month for a year** - Melissa Bruins

**Felco hand pruners** - Patricia Jennings,  
Scott Klassen, Lynne Zolli

**Maxsea Fertilizer**- Alan Leveton,  
Lana Tomitch, Gini Griffin

**West County Gloves** - Ruth Bowen,  
Sharonjean Leeds, Shirley McCallum,  
Patricia Delgado, Eileen Melville



Keep a lookout  
for our  
Summer  
Children's  
Garden Arts  
Series

Starting in July we will be holding a series of Saturday morning garden arts workshops for parents & children of all ages at many of our stores! Schedules will be available in June.



*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 Sunset's Western Garden Book. Send address corrections to: 420 Coloma Street, Sausalito, CA 94965.