

Gardener's Notebook

Volume 26, No. 1

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

March/April 2012

coleus

Coleus Gold Anemone



Coleus Red Coral



Coleus Hermit Crab



Coleus Lime Shrimp



We're positively enthralled with the new collection from HortCouture. **Coleus Under the Sea** features unique shapes resembling lobster, shrimp and other tidal pool creatures.

With oceanic names like Molten Coral and Lagostino, these coleus are upright, mounding thrillers that look great in mixed containers or in the landscape.

You will only find these plants at independent garden centers and nurseries. Sloat Garden Center is proud to offer them to the Bay Area. Bring Coleus Under The Sea home for a fun, tropical, unique and sun tolerant plant treat.

Coleus Bonefish



Coleus Lagostino



Coleus Molten Coral



under the sea

INSIDE: mini-gardens, new plant introductions, plan to can, indoor gardening, cool weather tomatoes

Graceful new varieties of Helleborus, Flax Lily & Peony



**Winter Jewels™ Cherry Blossom
Lenten Rose**

Helleborus 'Cherry Blossom'

This helleborus has rich pink flowers with cherry red centers... flowers appear in late winter or early spring. Evergreen foliage provides year round interest and is deer resistant. Prefers partial to full shade and moist, well drained soil.



**Gold Collection® Pink Frost Lenten
Rose**

Helleborus x ballardiae 'Pink Frost'

On this helleborus, burgundy stems support leathery leaves with a silver frosting. Flowers are white, pink, and deep rose toned and upward facing; unusual for a hellebore. Evergreen, long blooming and deer resistant! A superb groundcover and perennial for shady borders.



**Bloomerang® Purple Lilac
Syringa x 'Penda'**

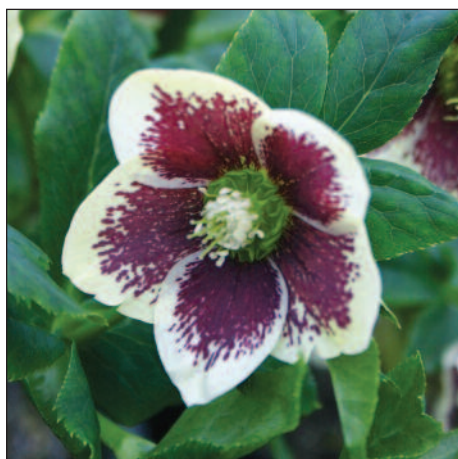
Enjoy classic lilac fragrance for months instead of weeks! This revolutionary new type of lilac blooms in spring and then again throughout the summer. It's a compact, mounded variety which fits easily into any landscape and is ideal as a foundation planting or in a mixed border. You can even include it in perennial beds!



**Winter Jewels™ Apricot Blush Lenten
Rose**

Helleborus 'Apricot Blush'

This helleborus features varying shades of peachy-apricot blooms with darker rose veining, speckling or picotee edges which appear in early spring. The large 3 to 4 inch nodding flowers last for weeks. Prefers full sun to partial shade. Deer resistant.



**Winter Jewels™ Painted Lenten Rose
Helleborus 'Painted'**

Love this helleborus! It features heavily spotted, 3 inch flowers on vigorous plants. White blooms tinged with magenta appear from late winter through spring. Each petal has intense painted or brushed spotting. Prefers partial to full shade and moist, well-drained soil. Deer resistant.



Do Tell Peony

Paeonia lactiflora 'Do Tell'

An anemone type flower, Do Tell Peony offers large single blossoms with light pink petals surrounding a deep rose and yellow fringed center. This mid-season bloomer produces strong stems and deep emerald green foliage. Lovely massed in borders or as a cut flower. Flowers have a mild fragrance.



Tiny fun with mini gardening



Create a tiny world of your own (indoors or outdoors) with a miniature garden. This is a great project for all ages!

Mini-gardening is similar to regular gardening, but it takes place on a smaller scale. The same considerations of shade, sun and watering apply. Groups of compatible plants are combined with gravel, rock and miniature accessories to create in-scale tiny garden scenes in a container or secreted away in a garden bed. The plants and miniature accessories stay in scale with each other to create a sustainable, true garden in miniature.

There are lots of ways to create mini-gardens: as an indoor terrarium, small desktop garden, beneath a cloche, as part of an outdoor "bonsai" planting or in a succulent low-bowl. The design & components are limited only by your imagination.



A fairy could hide in this terrarium cloche...

In addition to individual accessories, we also carry Fairy Garden kits. The kit includes everything you need to create a beautiful and whimsical dwelling for fairies and plants:

- a box for planting
- lid that becomes a saucer
- soil
- arbor with bench
- birdbath
- wheelbarrow
- tiny pebbles to form a path
- Fairy Dust
- design, planting and care instructions

Cool weather heirloom tomato varieties to grow this March & April

The ground and the air are still a bit cool, but you can get a jump start on growing tomatoes. Just choose from our featured small to medium tomato varieties that need fewer days to ripen. Stay tuned for details on our warm weather tomato varieties in the May/June edition of the Sloat Gardener's Notebook.



Thinking of growing vegetables this year?
You can preserve the peak of the moment
garden freshness by canning! See
www.sloatgardens.com for canning details.

Ailsa Craig
Babywine
Beginner
Black Krim
Black Prince
Bush Champion
Brazilian Beauty
Buckbees New 50 Day
Cordova*
Earl of Edgecombe*
Early Rouge*
Early Clear Pink*
Early Girl
Golden Cherokee*
Glacier

Legend
Maskabec
Maule's Earliest of All
Oregon Cherry
Paul Robeson
Petaluma Hill Purple**
Rainbow Cherry
Sebastopol **
Siberia
Stupice
Siletz
Visitation Valley **

*new for 2012

** bred locally



Plan to can.



This spring and summer you can preserve peak of the moment garden flavors by canning the fruits and vegetables you've grown. Canning can seem complex, but it really is just one step beyond cooking.

Canning is a simple method that applies heat to food in a closed glass canning jar and removes air from the jar to create a seal; this stops the natural spoilage that would otherwise take place.

We are carrying a full line of Ball canning products in our stores this spring. For complete instructions on how to can, visit our website for a link to Ball's Complete Guide to Home Preserving.

www.sloatgardens.com



		Ideal for
Wide Mouth	Pint (16oz)	Salsa, sauces, relishes and fruit butters
	Quart (32oz)	Pickles, tomatoes and whole or halved fruits and vegetables

		Ideal for
Regular mouth	Half Pint (8oz)	Fruit syrups, chutneys and pizza sauce
	Pint (16oz)	Salsas, sauces, relishes & pie fillings
	Quart (32oz)	Sliced fruits & vegetables, pickles, tomato based sauces and juices

not just for canning...

Glass canning jars can be used for a multitude of uses. Here are some of our favorites:

- Storage containers for dry goods: rice, pasta, cereal, beans, snacks, cookies, chips
- Storing leftovers
- Growing sprouts
- Drinking glasses (we love pint sized)
- Vase for fresh flowers
- Loose change jar
- Terrarium cloche
- Salad dressing (mix & shake it up!)
- Recipe in a jar gifts

Our 2nd Annual Blueberry Daze!

March 23 - April 1



Celebrate delicious blueberries: Stop by our stores and select from a range of blueberries in every shape and size!

Southern Highbush low chill varieties
(semi-evergreen varieties)

Sunshine Blue, O'Neil, Sharpblue,
South Moon, Legacy, Misty

Northern Highbush (longer chill) varieties

(these are considered to have the best fruit)
Bluecrop, Berkeley, Bluejay, Chandler, Reka

Plan to can: Blueberry Citrus Conserve

Makes about 4 (8 oz) half pints. Recipe from Ball Jars' www.freshpreserving.com

Citrus fruits enhance the rich, earthy flavor of blueberries in this luscious royal blue conserve. Serve it with bread or as a condiment.

4 cups sugar
2 cups water
1 small lemon (unpeeled), seeded
and thinly sliced
1/2 cup orange (unpeeled), seeded
and thinly sliced

1/2 cup raisins
4 cups blueberries
4 (8 oz) half pint
glass preserving jars
with lids and band



PREPARE boiling water canner. Heat jars and lids in simmering water until ready for use. Do not boil. Set bands aside.

COMBINE sugar and water in a large, deep stainless steel saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add lemon and orange slices and raisins. Reduce heat and boil gently for 5 minutes. Add blueberries, increase heat to high and return to boil. Boil hard, stirring constantly, for 5 to 10 minutes, until mixture thickens. Remove from heat and test gel. If gel stage has been reached, skim off foam.

LADLE hot conserve into hot jars leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe rim. Center lid on jar. Apply band and adjust until fit is fingertip tight.

PROCESS filled jars in a boiling water canner for 15 minutes, adjusting for altitude. Remove jars and cool. Check lids for seal after 24 hours. Lid should not flex up and down when center is pressed.

No yard? No problem.

Bring the sun inside!



If you don't have space to garden or perhaps lack a sunny windowsill, a great alternative is to create your own indoor garden with a growlight. It's simple, easy and fun.

For decades gardeners have used growlights to start seeds indoors before setting them outside, but you can also use growlights year round to enjoy fresh vegetables and herbs. It's a rewarding and efficient way to garden regardless of weather, and a great way to teach kids about gardening. Plus, the deliciousness of having fresh herbs and greens at the ready is hard to deny.

Indoor growlights can also be used in a soil-less indoor gardening system called Hydroponic Gardening. Stay tuned for future Gardener's Notebooks where we'll discuss turning your indoor gardening system to a soil-less hydroponic gardening system, or stop by select Sloat Garden Centers for an in-person hydroponic demonstration.

Herbs that will thrive under a growlight

BASIL	LAVENDER	PARSLEY
BORAGE	LEMON BALM	ROSEMARY
CATNIP	LEMON GRASS	SAGE
CHIVES	LEMON VERBENA	SORREL
CHICORY	MARJORAM	TARRAGON
DILL	MINT	THYME
EPAZOTE	OREGANO	LEMON THYME



This year we're carrying the 2 foot wide **Jump Start T5 Grow Light System**. The super efficient T5 lights help you grow plants faster by providing 15-20% more lumens than traditional grow lights. It features a simple toggle clamp for easy lamp height adjustment, and the fixture has an internal reflective finish that directs more light to plants. Ideal for herbs, vegetables, seedlings, African Violets, orchids, flowering bulbs, cuttings, flowers and house plants. Super easy assembly!

A kitchen garden, indoors + out

Basil is the quintessential summer herb, but it can also be grown indoors year-round. Try this wonderful pesto recipe from our Garden Guru with your first indoor basil harvest!

A few words about growing basil: Basil needs well drained soil, plenty of light and regular water. Use compost or potting soil for best results, and feed with **E.B. Stone Fish Emulsion** if leaves start to pale (liquid fertilizers are gentler on basil). As basil grows, make sure to keep flowers picked off; otherwise flowers will set seeds, which inhibits healthy leaf growth.

Our Garden Guru's Pesto

- 1 clove garlic (minimum)
- 1 bunch fresh basil, cleaned & stemmed
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese
- 1/3 cup toasted pine nuts
- (Also try dry roasted almonds, cashews or pistachios)
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- salt and pepper, to taste



Blend all the ingredients together in a food processor until smooth; serve over pasta, on pizza or with garlic bread.

We're loving the **Fiskars MicroTip Snip** when it comes to indoor gardening. This handy tool makes dead-heading, trimming and shaping plants easy and ergonomic. High-grade, stainless-steel blades feature a precision-ground edge that stays sharp longer and snips all the way to the tip for clean, healthy cuts. Has a soft touch handle for a more comfortable grip. Great for mini-gardening as well.



Need a fertilizer for indoor plants? **Foxfarm Big Bloom** is an odorless, liquid fertilizer that incorporates earthworm castings, bat guano and other high test organic ingredients that offer a full, balanced range of nutrients. Perfect for indoor gardening!

Tillandsia: Small & Sweet.

Thank goodness trends are cyclical, because tillandsia are back in favor; in fact, they've become the latest stars of minimalist and modern décor. These tropical plants in the bromeliad family are epiphytes, meaning they live by absorbing water and nutrients through their leaves, rather than from the soil. They can grow just about anywhere; in a bowl, vase, tucked into a wreath or even a seashell.

Tillandsia care:

Tillandsia need bright, indirect light and intermediate to warm temperatures. Native to humid environments, they enjoy regular misting. Once or twice a month they will appreciate a good bath. Fill a bowl with room temperature water and immerse the whole plant; let it soak for an hour or two. Shake dry and return it to its nook.

One of our favorite presentations for tillandsia (and for succulents) is placing them in a gnarled piece of **grapewood** (we sell grapewood in 3 sizes, as well as Tilly Tacker to adhere the tillandsia to almost any surface). Grapewood has natural pockets for planting and can be hung on a wall or placed on a table. Tillandsia always look beautiful paired up with **succulents**.



Staghorn fern

What an interesting plant! Staghorn ferns are epiphytes usually grown on slabs of bark or wood, mounted to a wall, presented in hanging baskets or attached to trees (the latter is their native habitat). Staghorn fern fronds look like the antlers of a deer.

Staghorn fern care:

They do best with regular water, though they can dry out briefly without suffering damage. Outdoors, staghorn ferns need partial shade and indirect light. Indoors, they do best by a north facing window. Having them mounted to a wall allows air to circulate around them.

At the base of staghorn ferns are brown, flat leaves--these are essential for growth... please don't remove them.

Why add E.B. Stone Planting Compost?



Filled with 100% Natural Organic ingredients, E.B. Stone Planting Compost replenishes and rebuilds garden soils. By adding this rich compost to your garden, you can improve the quality of your soil and help your plants become sturdier and more productive. Easy to use, this compost can be mixed into all soil types as an amendment, or layered on top as a nutrient-building, dark mulch. Planting Compost can be added to existing soils that have become depleted over time, or to new garden beds for optimum results.

The valuable organic matter in the planting compost helps to improve the nutrient and moisture retention of loose, sandy soils. At the same time, it helps to loosen heavy, clay soils which promotes aeration and drainage. Above all, organic matter feeds the vital soil organisms that help your garden thrive.

For new plantings add 1-2 inches over the garden soil and dig-in to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. As a mulch, add a 2-3" layer over the garden soil. Each bag can be used to transplant 3 to 4 one-gallon plants, or used to cover 15 sq. feet with a one inch layer of mulch.

Bonide Citrus, Fruit & Nut Orchard Spray is an **all natural**, all-in-one, insect and disease control made from sulfur and pyrethrins. Not only is it great for citrus, fruit, and nuts, it can also be used on vegetables, ornamentals, houseplants and lawns. **Truly effective and all-purpose.**



Support plant health!



SPRING gardening seminars

Each season we select local gardening experts and designers, as well as our knowledgeable senior staff, to speak in our seminar series. The class fee is \$5 (Gardener's Reward Program members attend for free) and all participants receive a 10% off coupon for redemption at any of our locations. **Please call ahead to the seminar location to reserve a seat. Attendance is limited.**

Artful Gardening in Small Spaces

Mary TeSelle, owner of Quite Contrary Gardens, joins us to offer fun and, well, contrary ideas for our smaller garden areas such as side yards, decks, tunnel entrances, and patios. This award-winning gal will visit us throughout spring so stay tuned!
Saturday, March 3rd, 10:00 at Miller Ave.
Wednesday, March 7th, 6:30 at Sloat Blvd.

Edible Landscaping

Dustin Strobel and Brad Sheehan join forces to educate us on how to create beautiful, functional, edible gardens. Whether your garden space is big or small, learn options to meet your goals.
Saturday, March 10th, 10:00 at Danville

Citrus Pruning

Welcome back Elizabeth Ruiz, aesthetic pruner, as she guides us through the steps on how to train and shape our citrus trees for fruit production, shape and health.
Saturday, March 10th, 10:00 at Miller Ave.
Sunday, March 11th, 12:00 at Novato
Wednesday, March 21st, 6:30 at Sloat Blvd.
Sunday, April 15th, 12:00 at Danville

Tomatoes and Herbs Together

Norma Novy, gardening aficionado and soils expert, ventures east to share her knowledge on growing healthy, tasty, high yielding tomatoes and herbs. Two back-to-back seminars will give you a jump on spring planting
Sunday, April 1st, at Danville
Tomatoes 12:00 to 1:00
Herbs 1:30 to 2:30

Tomato Tomata

Norma Novy, soils and garden enthusiast, helps us get our groove on in all things tomato.
Wednesday, April 4th, 6:30 at Sloat Blvd.
Sunday, April 15th, 10:00 at Miller Ave.
Sunday, April 15th, 1:00 at Novato

Salvage Gardening

Mary TeSelle returns to tell us how to use and repurpose household objects and building components in a quite contrary way.
Saturday, April 14th, 10:00 at Miller Ave.
Wednesday, April 18th, 6:30 at Sloat Blvd.

Pruning the Acid Lovers: Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Camellias and Hydrangeas

Our favorite pruner, Elizabeth Ruiz, returns one last time this season to explain and show us how to shape and prune these most daunting plant subjects.
Sunday, April 29th, 12:00 at Danville
Wednesday, May 2nd, 6:30 at Sloat Blvd.
Sunday, May 6th, 10:00 at Novato
Saturday, May 12th, 10:00 at Miller Ave.

Shade Gardening How To

Mary TeSelle's encore performance this season is a well-rounded discussion on one of the more challenging locations; gardens in the shade.
Saturday, May 5th, 10:00 at Miller Ave.
Wednesday, May 16th, 6:30 at Sloat Blvd.

Growing Herbs!

Norma Novy returns to share her secrets on growing flavorful herbs
Sunday, May 20th, 10:00 at Miller Ave
Sunday May 20th, 1:00 at Novato
Wednesday, May 23rd, 6:30 at Sloat Blvd

Our Garden Design Department

Invite one of our Garden Designers to create a whole new garden or help you renew your existing one. Our consultants develop simple sketch plans and plant lists that are easy to follow. Let us tailor a plan to fit your space and your budget. See our website for examples of our work.

www.sloatgardens.com

Contact our Design Dept:
415-388-3754
design@sloatgardens.com



Mill Valley East Blithedale location shines with new Manager!

Molly Congdon manages Sloat Garden Center's Mill Valley/E. Blithedale location. She creates a fun and inviting atmosphere and has a knowledgeable staff.

"Our store is staffed by a unique mix of folks working together toward a common goal; to have fun educating gardeners," says Molly.

"We all work at becoming better garden coaches, so learning from our customers is a part of what happens every day. I feel so lucky to work with the team at the Blithedale Sloat...and also lucky to work with Mill Valley gardeners, because they like to grow food and are interested in ecosystem gardening."

Visit our stores: Nine Locations in San Francisco, Marin and Contra Costa

Richmond District
3rd Avenue between
Geary & Clement
(415) 752-1614

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

Marina District
3237 Pierce Street
Chestnut & Lombard
(415) 440-1000
9 to 6:30

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
(415) 454-0262

Danville
828 Diablo Road at El Cerro
(925) 743-0288
M-Sat hours: 8 to 6:30pm
Sun hours: 8am to 5pm

Garden Design Department
401 Miller, Mill Valley
(415) 388-3754

Bulk Soils
828 Diablo Road at El Cerro
(925) 820-1273
(East Bay delivery only)
M-Sat 8-4

Visit us on the web: www.sloatgardens.com • Also find us on...

S l o a t



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8 SLOAT NOTEBOOK March/April 2012

Bay Area Gardening Guide

Plant:

☞ **It's Vegetable Planting Time!** Organic vegetable starts and seeds are here. Start your edible garden early this year. Add **E.B. Stone's Agricultural Lime** to soil to provide needed calcium for your vegetables and fruit.

☞ Plant your favorite annuals for spring. **Impatiens, petunias, marigolds, cosmos** and **lobelia** are budding and blooming.

☞ Say yes to summer bulbs! Plant **gladiolus** and **dahlias** now for summer color.

☞ **Rhododendrons** and **azaleas** are budding and

blooming. After the bloom cycle, use **Azalea** and **Camellia** food from **E.B. Stone**.

Fertilize:

☞ Fertilize your garden and houseplants with **Osmocote** to provide ongoing nutrition for up to four months.

Use **E.B. Stone Sure Start** fertilizer for new plantings to establish them quickly.

☞ Stock up on a season's-worth of top quality, plant-specific



fertilizers from **E.B. Stone**. The "Naturals" and "Organics" lines are environmentally friendly.

Prune/Maintain:

☞ Snails and slugs are hatching in your garden right now. Non-toxic **Sluggo** can help.

☞ Wait to prune spring blooming shrubs until after flowering.

☞ Prepare planting beds for spring. Test your soil for pH, nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium and add appropriate fertilizer. We recommend amending soil with **Sloat Loam Builder, Sloat Forest Mulch Plus,**

March & April

Sloat Planting Mix or **E.B. Stone Planting Compost**.

☞ Aphids are beginning to appear. Stop them early with either **Bonide Insecticidal Soap, Bonide All Seasons Oil**....or, **Greenlight Rose Defense**. Use on roses and all your plants!

☞ Use **Serenade** bacteria-based fungicide to prevent and cure spring rust and mildew. (OMRI listed).

