

S l o a t



G a r d e n C e n t e r

Locally  
owned since  
1958!

# Gardener's Notebook

Volume 27, No. 1

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

March/April 2013

Three great

*Mediterranean*

landscape  
plants that will  
work hard  
in your  
yard.



*Cistus*



*Coleonema*



*Coprosma*

*Cistus, Coleonema and Coprosma are perfectly suited to our climate and adaptable to a variety of growing conditions.*

**Cistus** is also known as Rockrose; it's a terrific, carefree shrub that bears a profusion of showy flowers from spring into early summer. Soft green, silver or gray foliage will add subtle color and texture to your garden. Single flowers have contrasting centers or petals marked at the base. Cistus is fragrant on warm days and are worth planting for this feature alone.

Cistus loves sun and dry climates. It's fast-growing, tolerant of poor soil, cold ocean winds, salt spray and desert heat. It makes a good erosion control cover for dry banks and works well in big rock gardens, rough areas along drives or in wild plantings. Taller varieties make attractive informal hedges.

Cistus can be grown in full-to-part sun, needs average to good drainage, and little or no summer watering when established. Give plants well drained soil if they will be watered regularly. Frost hardy.

**Coleonema pulchrum** is also known as Pink Diosma or 'Breath of Heaven'. Related to citrus and a native of South Africa, Coleonema grows 3' to 5' tall and 4' to 6' wide, with soft, fragrant, bright green foliage and a heavy show of delicate, slender pink flowers in spring and fall. Coleonema looks great on banks or hillsides, or along paths where you can break off a twig to enjoy the fragrance. Plant in light soil; fast drainage is a must. To control size and promote compactness, shear lightly after bloom is over. Needs full sun or light shade -- little or no summer watering is needed once established.

**Coprosma**, also known as Mirror Bush, is available in a variety of shiny foliage hues from coppery pink to burgundy. Coprosma looks great against a colored wall or combined with other foliage plants such as variegated or blue toned grasses (Fescue or Helictotrichon), agaves, or phormiums. It also makes a striking container plant. Does well in sun to mostly shade. Needs average drainage and watering.

## 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 (near 101)  
401 Miller Ave. at La Goma  
(415) 388-0365 (near downtown)

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

Open 7 days per week 8:30am to 6:30pm  
(or as noted above in Danville & SF Marina)

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# Sloat



Locally  
owned since  
1958!

Garden Center

420 Coloma Street  
Sausalito, CA 94965-1428



We'll help you grow the plants you love!

8 SLOAT NOTEBOOK March/April 2013

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a Sloat Garden Center  
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on Twitter. Check out  
our homepage for details.

## Bay Area Gardening Guide:

## March & April

### Plant:

It's  
Vegetable  
Planting Time!

Organic veg-  
etable 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 bloom-  
ing.



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 estab-  
lish them quickly.

Stock up on a  
season's-worth of top qual-  
ity, plant-specific

fertilizers from **E.B. Stone**.  
The "Naturals" and  
"Organics" lines are envi-  
ronmentally 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,  
Sloat Planting Mix** or **E.B.**

### Stone Planting Compost.

Aphids  
are begin-  
ning to  
appear.  
Stop them  
early with  
either

**Bonide Neem Oil** or  
**Monterey Take Down Oil**.  
Use on roses and all your  
plants!

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





Lemon Sorbet

Look for more Trixi Combinations in May and June!

## Colorful Trixi Combinations

Wow, talk about eye-catching color! Trixi combinations are our new flowering collections that bloom vigorously throughout summer and fall. They are created with different varieties of Calibrachoa, Verbena, Lobelia and Portulaca (though color and exact variety can vary). They're perfect for displaying in pots, window boxes, flower boxes or hanging baskets. Sloat Garden Center will have six combinations in 10" hanging baskets and 6" pots; we will offer a new combination every two weeks through the end of May. Get them all!

### MARCH Combinations

**Gold & Bold:** Calibrachoa Deep Yellow, Electric Purple & Royal Blue  
**Purple with a Purpose:** Calibrachoa Compact White, Dark Blue & lavender

### APRIL Combinations

**Lemon Sorbet:** Bidens Yellow, Calibrachoa Tangerine & Petunia Fame.  
**Caribbean Cocktail:** Calibrachoa Dark Blue, Scarlet & Tangerine



Caribbean Cocktail



Purple with a Purpose



Gold & Bold

## Grow your own tea and beer with Camellia sinensis and Hops

This might be the ultimate in growing your own food.

You can brew beer from your own garden grown hops and make tea from leaves picked fresh from the garden.

Visit our stores this spring and discover *Camellia sinensis* (Tea) and two types of Hops (Cascade and Nugget).



*Camellia sinensis* (tea) is the plant whose leaves, twigs and leaf buds are used to make tea. It grows as a dense round shrub with leathery, dark green leaves and small, fragrant, white flowers in fall (which resemble miniature *Camellia sasanqua* flowers).

Sloat Garden Center will be carrying hardy *Camellia sinensis* from the area around Sochi, Russia, where this variety is used to produce very aromatic and flavorful tea.

*Camellia sinensis* likes half-to-full day sun and well-drained, acidic soil. It will mature to 4-5 ft. high and it blooms from September to November.



Hops, used as a flavoring in beer, are the flowers on an extremely fast growing, climbing, perennial (*Humulus*). Many varieties of hops are grown throughout the world, with different types being used for varying flavors of beer.

This spring we're offering two types of hops. **Nugget** is a high alpha-acid (bittering) type hop

that's a popular commercial variety and valued for its abundant crop and vigorous growth. **Cascade** is a popular aroma hop known for its high yield and large, elongated flowers.

Hops like half to full-day-sun and well-drained soil. The plant will bear flowers 2 years after planting.

Hops need to be trained; they grow 10-12 ft. tall or wide on a fence, arbor or other support. Hops bloom in June and July and are ripe in September and October with a yield of 1-1/2 to 2 lbs. of dried flowers per plant. Hops are disease-resistant and rarely bothered by insects or pests.

## PLANT CLIMBING VINES THIS SPRING

### JASMINUM POLYANTHUM

This very popular Jasmine is famous for its abundant and spectacular pinkish-white fragrant flowers.

Plant it in containers to dress up fences, train over gateways and up posts, columns, trellises, or as a groundcover. It's particularly lovely when draped over windows so the fragrance wafts inside, or trained on an arbor where the light lacy quality offers filtered sunlight below.



Follow a regular watering schedule during the first growing season to establish a deep, extensive root system. Provide trellis or arbor support for it to climb -- it's fast-growing. Prune annually to control size; the best pruning time is fall after flowering.

### CLEMATIS AVALANCHE



Clematis Avalanche blooms in early spring with distinctive toothed foliage. It offers a profusion of white flowers and is content climbing a wall, fence or rambling as a ground cover.

This Clematis looks fabulous espaliered onto a

trellis or fence. You can twine it up and over wood or metal arches at gates, entries, railings and posts. Or, drape over fences in narrow sideyards for a short range view of flowers from windows. The snowy white, unique foliage and golden stamens are best appreciated up close.

Needs regular watering; weekly, or more often in extreme heat.

**MONROVIA**  
HORTICULTURAL CRAFTSMEN SINCE 1926

## Garden Guru to the rescue:

### Control insects with organic Neem Oil!

Dear Garden Guru,

*Leaf curl affects my apple tree. Though usually to a minor degree, it was a bit worse last year and I'm wondering what I can apply now. I'd prefer something non-toxic / natural.*

*Thanks for your help.*

- Ed in SF



Dear Ed,

The leaf curl you describe was probably caused by green aphid. The insects locate themselves on the underside of the leaves and cause the leaf to curl around them, thus protecting them from sprays. Right after the apple finishes blooming and as the new leaves emerge, spray the tree with Bonide Neem Oil. This is a safe, organic control that prevents powdery mildew and repels/smother aphids. Neem Oil is three garden products in one:

- Multi-purpose fungicide/insecticide/miticide
- Kills eggs, larvae and adult stages of insects.
- Prevents fungal attack of plant tissues.

**Bonide Neem Oil** is an effective control against blackspot, powdery mildew, rust, spider mites, aphids, whiteflies and other insect pests. For areas infested with grubs, saturate the soil as night temperatures warm in spring. Use before beetles emerge from the soil in the early summer. For use on roses, flowers, houseplants, ornamental trees and shrubs, fruits, nuts and vegetables. Can be used up to the day of harvest.



Join Sloat Garden Center next month for **Tomato Time**...a celebration of tomatoes! We'll have 50+ organic tomato varieties, tomato growing seminars and tomato growing information. Shop during Tomato Time for the most abundant selection of the season...April is the best time to plant tomatoes!

# FEED THE BIRDS!

**"The more birds a yard can support, the fewer insects there will be the following year."**

- Thalassa Cruso



**Metal seed feeder with squirrel blocking cage**  
Easy access for filling.



**Contemporary metal fly-through seed feeder finished in metallic jet black.**



**12" Heavy duty seed feeder**  
with 4 removable ports and quick release base.



**12" Heavy duty nyjer seed feeder**  
with quick release base and a poly "no mess" filling sleeve.



**8" Heavy duty seed feeder**  
with 2 removable ports and quick release base.



**Heavy duty water feeder**  
with sturdy metal base and removable poly water bottle.



**97" Dining Station**  
with two-way head and ground spike. Kit includes feeding tray, water dish and additional hook.

*All styles are not represented at all stores. Call ahead for specific items.*

## FIVE WAYS TO ATTRACT MORE BIRDS

1. Put out the welcome mat: Enhance your backyard by landscaping with native plants, providing feeders, natural food sources, water, shelter and nesting sites.
2. Prepare a proper menu: Refill feeders regularly with foods suited to the birds in your area and the season.
3. Keep it clean: Clean feeders, baths and feeding areas regularly.
4. Keep it safe: Avoid using pesticides, herbicides or other dangerous chemicals where birds feed, bathe or nest.
5. Remove obstacles: Reduce window collisions. Keep feeders at least three feet from windows, and add decorations to windows where collisions could occur.

**Food for Songbirds, Woodpeckers, Cardinals, Finches, Titmice, Jays, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Nuthatches and Chickadees.**



**Gourmet Wild Bird Food:**  
a premium wild bird food for all seed eating birds.



**Nut N' Berry:** a premium wild bird food blend of hulled seeds, sunflowers, nutmeats, raisins and fruits to attract and feed all seed eating birds.

Bird feeding tips: Keep feeders full. Keep clean and make sure fresh water is available. Feed birds all year long to ensure their return.

# Earth Day Pollinators

We carry many plants that will attract beneficial insects!



Beneficial ladybug eating aphids



Bee on scabiosa

## ANNUALS & PERENNIALS

- Alyssum
- Yarrow
- Aster
- Coreopsis
- Borage
- Scabiosa
- Calendula
- Clover
- Caryopteris (Blue Beard)
- Evening Primrose
- Sedum
- Santa Barbara Daisy
- Agrostemma (Corn Cockle)
- Lobelia
- Cone flowers
- Queen Anne's Lace
- Limonium (Sea Lavender)
- Sunflowers
- Buckwheat
- Penstemon
- Baby's Breath
- Veronica
- Columbine
- Marigold
- Monarda (Bee Balm)
- Ajuga (Carpet Bugle)
- Lavender
- Zinnia

## VIRTUALLY ALL HERBS (ESPECIALLY IN FLOWER)

- Fennel
- Mint
- Tansy
- Caraway
- Feverfew
- Valerian
- Dill
- Parsley
- Rue
- Catnip
- Chamomile
- Sage
- Thyme
- Chervil
- Lemon Balm
- Sweet Marjoram
- Lovage
- Oregano
- Rosemary
- Cilantro (Coriander)
- Chives



At Sloat Garden Center we deeply believe gardening is good for the planet -- we urge gardeners to plant something this Earth Day.

Another way to celebrate Earth Day is to keep chemicals out of the garden when trying to get rid of harmful insects. Instead, manage pests by using one of the oldest and most successful methods of pest control on the planet; attract beneficial insects that will prey on pests. Ladybugs, lacewings, praying mantis and beneficial nematodes will eat nuisance insects. They truly are "good" bugs!

Planning a balanced garden with plenty of beneficial insects is the key to both gardening success and protecting the environment. You can attract the beneficial insects that feed on plant eating critters by creating an environment for them to live, feed and lay their eggs.

Earth Day is April 22nd!



Start dreaming about your new garden. Call the **Sloat Garden Design Department**  
 We'll help you create a brand new garden space! 415-388-3754 [design@sloatgardens.com](mailto:design@sloatgardens.com) [www.sloatgardens.com](http://www.sloatgardens.com)

## Our 3rd Annual Blueberry Daze March 22 - 31



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

**Blueberry Basics: Pruning and Care**  
 Early spring is the best time to prune and shape your plants. Sign up and learn how!  
 Wednesday, March 20th 6:30pm, Sloat Blvd.  
 Saturday, March 23rd 10:30am,  
 Miller Ave., Mill Valley  
 Sunday, March 24th, 12 noon, Danville



- 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, Blueray, Chandler, Reka

Get gardening with our Planting Mix!



**Sloat Organic Planting Mix**  
 100% organic, our Planting Mix promotes drainage, air and water penetration, and loosens clay soil.

## Bu's Brew Biodynamic Compost Tea Bags



This spring we have a new compost tea that we really like using. **Bu's Brew Biodynamic Compost Tea** is a Certified Biodynamic liquid foliar (just add water)

for flowers, vegetables, shrubs, trees and grasses. Created to restore plant vitality, this tea enhances beneficial microbial activity in plants and soil. Each teabag makes approximately 1-2 gallons of tea and the packaging is fully compostable.

Malibu Compost is a company of farmers who strive to nurture their animals and land. They take the triple bottom line approach to business: "sustaining people; sustaining planet; sustaining commerce."



*It's easy! Simply add a teabag or two (one for each 2.5 gallons of water) in a bucket, fill with water and let sit overnight. The farmers at Bu's Brew say, "in the morning, stir the mix until you get a nice vortex going. Then, stir it the other way." Remove the teabags and put the tea into a spray bottle and spray on foliage, or just water directly into roots.*

## Coleus Under the Sea and Bacopa Tie Dye will add color to your garden this April



**Coleus under the Sea Collection**

Back by popular demand this spring is HortCouture's **Coleus Under the Sea**, featuring unique shapes that resemble tidal pool objects (**Molten Coral** and **King Coral**). These coleus are upright, mounding thrillers that look great in mixed containers or in the landscape. Bring Coleus Under The Sea home for a fun, tropical, sun tolerant plant treat.



**Molten Coral**



**King Coral**



**Bacopa Tie Dye**

is a truly unique and stunning plant. This bacopa has pale white flowers that are set off by a deep pink ring and a yellow center. It has a mounding habit which spills over containers and hanging baskets. Exceptionally heat tolerant!



# 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.*

### Blueberry Basics: Pruning and Care

Early spring is the best time to prune and shape your plants. Sign up and learn how!

Wednesday, March 20th, 6:30pm, Sloat Blvd. (SF)  
 Saturday, March 23rd, 10:30am, Miller Ave., Mill Valley  
 Sunday, March 24th, 12 noon, Danville

### Pruning and Maintenance of California Natives

Wednesday, April 3rd 6:30pm at Sloat Blvd  
 Saturday, April 6th 10:30am at Miller Ave. in Mill Valley

### Tomato Growing Secrets

Join Norma Novy of The Soil Sisters and Brad Sheehan, the Vegetable Guy, for a talk on all things tomato  
 Saturday, April 13th, 1pm, Miller Ave., Mill Valley (Norma)  
 Saturday, April 13th, 12 noon, Danville (Brad)  
 Wednesday, April 17th, 6:30pm, Sloat Blvd. (Norma)

### Home Composting for Busy People

Join us for a 90 minute workshop on composting and vermicomposting conducted by the Central Costa Contra Solid Waste Authority  
 Sunday, April 21st, 12 noon - 1:30pm, Danville



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

Our favorite pruner, Elizabeth Ruiz, returns to demonstrate how to shape and prune these most daunting plant subjects.

Wednesday, May 1st, 6:30pm, Sloat Blvd.  
 Saturday, May 4th 10:30am, Novato  
 Sunday, May 5th, 12 noon, Danville

### Spring Pruning of Japanese Maples

Did you know that spring pruning is good for your Japanese Maple trees? Aesthetic pruner Elizabeth Ruiz will talk about pruning Japanese maples.

Saturday, May 18th, 10:30am Miller Ave., Mill Valley

### Herbs and Edible Flowers in the Home Garden

Join Norma Novy of the Soil Sisters for a very informative talk on growing these tasty plants successfully  
 Sunday, May 19th, 10:30am, Novato

## Strawberry Jam Session



Enjoy homegrown strawberries this spring!  
**May 3 - 12**

Join us in celebrating strawberries during our **Strawberry Jam Session**. We'll have strawberries in all sizes ready to flower and fruit, as well as everything you need to grow them successfully. *Tip: We recommend planting 5 strawberry plants per person in your household for optimum backyard berry production.*



Got weed control tools?



Pro-Tough Easy Gardener® Landmaster Weed Control Fabric is stronger and thicker for heavy-duty jobs in your garden or yard. This fabric is ideal under stones or rocks and in high-traffic areas. When placed under pavers it will also prevent unsightly sagging and settling of paths and walkways. We're carrying this weed control fabric in three sizes/lifespans: 3'x50' and 3'x100' (both 15 year) and 3'x50' (5 year).