

# Gardener's Notebook

Volume 29, No. 2

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

May/June 2015

## Plant a colorful, succulent, water-wise landscape this spring



We tend to celebrate succulents year-round at Sloat Garden Center; but this year we especially admire both their beauty and water wisdom.

Succulents are fascinating plants; their symmetry, muted vibrance and fleshy tactile quality invite touch. Their ability to withstand sporadic rainfall by storing water in their juicy leaves is what makes them truly valuable in the landscape.

Most succulents come from desert or semi-desert areas of the world, though not all enjoy full sun. Many grow in the shadow of rocks, trees, or larger plants, but all evolved into drought-resistant plants capable of surviving with intermittent rainfall. They are tolerant of neglect and have a large capacity for survival under poor conditions. Pay attention to light, water and food, and they will do more than thrive. Bonus: Succulent flowers are loved by hummingbirds.



**Haworthia** looks gorgeous in containers indoors and out. Its rhizomatous roots form a low clump.



**Agave** features vibrant, earth-toned, clusters. After flowering, agave produces "pups" to make new plants.



**Echeveria** form rosettes of fleshy green or gray-green leaves, with deeper colors. Lovely in rock gardens and as houseplants.



**Aloe** is showy and easy to grow. It needs full sun in cooler areas and light shade in hotter regions. Aloes make outstanding container plants.



**Sempervivum** have tight rosettes with fleshy leaves that spread into clusters by offsets. Great in rock gardens, pots and pockets of porous rock.

## Water-wise **Sweet Spot** roses are low maintenance and change into a kaleidoscope of color

Masses of rich, colorful blooms, lush, green foliage, and easy care make Sweet Spot roses ideal for gardens, containers, and borders. Compact in shape and size, these roses bloom non-stop spring to fall, and the color combinations change throughout the season as the flowers age. Sweet Spot roses grow 20" high to 24" wide. Care: Just trim back to half size in late fall or early spring -- that's all the pruning they need.



### **Sweet Spot™ Calypso**

Pinkish red and yellow blooms with dark pink center spots and lush foliage cover this compact shrub.



### **Sweet Spot™ Ruby**

Bright pink blossoms with pink/red ruby spot in the center. Rich flowering and ideal for decorating.



### **Sweet Spot™ Peach**

Beautiful, soft, peach flowers with a pink/red spot in the center. Rich flowering, lush green foliage and lots of blooms.

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S l o a t



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We'll help you grow the plants you love!

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Open 7 days per week 8:30am to 6:30pm

(or as noted above in Danville & SF Marina)

Don't Forget **Mother's Day** (May 10th)  
& **Father's Day** (June 21st). Stop by  
Sloat Garden Center for great gifts!

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## Bay Area Gardening Guide:

## May & June

### May

#### Plant

- Plant petunias, marigolds, begonias, lobelia, salvia and zinnia. Re-seed radishes, carrots and beets.
- Plant late summer edibles such as pumpkins, squash, sunflowers, peppers, basil and melons.
- Select garden-ready dahlias, perennials, hydrangeas, and hanging baskets.

#### Fertilize

- Fertilize rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias with **E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food**.
- 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 annuals with colorful 4-inch perennials such as verbena, calibrachoa, coleus, bacopa and ipomoea.
- Release ladybugs and other beneficial insects to help control aphids, mites, whiteflies, and other garden pests.

### June

#### Plant

- Warm season annuals are here! Plant zinnia, salvias, cosmos, lisianthus and portulaca.
- Plant herbs for use in the kitchen. Re-seed or transplant salad greens, green beans and kales.



#### Fertilize

- Your spring plantings are getting hungry. Feed them with all-purpose fertilizers such as **E.B. Stone Organics and Maxsea**.
- Feed your lawn with **Nature's Green Lawn Food**.

#### Prune/Maintain

- Continue to deadhead roses, shrubs and other flowers with **Felco pruners** to encourage new blooms; for smaller jobs, such as grooming your container creations, use **Fiskars Micro Tip Snips**.
- Mulch shrubs and beds to conserve moisture. Try **bark** (chipped or shredded) for its beauty and utility.
- Make sure vegetables are supported with cages, stakes, or trellises.
- Check early-bearing fruit trees for heavily laden branches. Thin fruits now to increase their size and prevent branches from breaking. Harvest vegetables as they ripen so plants continue producing.



**About this Newsletter:** The Gardener's Notebook is published three times a year 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 or via email to [sloat@sloatgardens.com](mailto:sloat@sloatgardens.com)



## Water-wise Oya vessels

Drastically reduce water waste in your garden with Oya, a terracotta vessel that gets planted in the ground and filled with water.



The rule of thumb is to plant thirsty plants to the center of the Oya and the lighter-drinking, more drought-tolerant plants to the outside. Longer, more creeping root systems are better at traveling through the soil to reach water in the Oya, while smaller rooted plants need to be closer to reach and get what they need.

Bury Oya and then fill it with water, but also surface water your garden for 1 to 2 weeks. This allows plant roots to get established and start their journey toward the Oya water source. Depending on conditions, seeds or young transplants planted near Oya may require more surface watering to start roots. Once roots are established, fill Oya once every 5-10 days.

As always, keep an eye out for signs of dehydration (wilting, browning) and add supplemental watering to plants as needed. Note: Root vegetables like carrots, beets, radishes, and parsnips should not be grown with Oya.

## Be water-wise: 8 tips for gardeners

Colorful and water-wise go hand-in-hand when you choose plants and techniques with water use in mind.

**1. Plant** succulents, California natives and Mediterranean style plants that are naturally acclimated to our Mediterranean climate. Whether Australian, South African, European or native, these plants can combine to create a lush garden. See our full Mediterranean style plant list: [www.sloatgardens.com](http://www.sloatgardens.com)

**2. Use mulch and compost.** Mulch reduces soil's water loss (among other benefits) and compost increases its ability to absorb and hold water.

**3. When you plant,** use water holding polymers such as *Soil Moist* to hold water longer, thus minimizing moisture loss due to evaporation. Use Oya vessels in flower or vegetable beds to reduce water waste. Bury the terracotta vessel and then fill it with water every 5-10 days. A plant's roots instinctively grow toward Oya's porous terracotta.

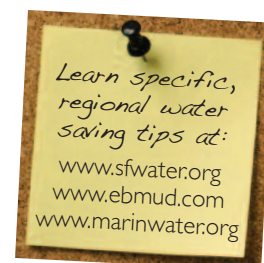
**4. Reduce** or replace your lawn with water-wise ground covers, low-maintenance perennials or a porous hardscape.

**5. Irrigate early** in the day to minimize evaporation. Also, water less often, yet more deeply, to encourage deeper root systems that better tolerate dry periods.

**6. Group plants** with similar water needs to make watering easier & more efficient.

**7. Weeds compete with water.** Get rid of them! A drip system, mulch and landscape fabric will help prevent weeds.

**8. Go with the low flow.** Use soaker hoses for irrigation, or invest in a drip system that can cut water use by as much as 90%. Run water at a moderate flow rather than opening the tap all the way, especially when hand watering. Use shut off valves on hoses so that water is not wasted as you move around your garden.



## Tropical, distinctive, Digiplexis is loved by pollinators in the spring and summer garden

This vibrant, vigorous, evergreen, perennial foxglove produces a succession of sturdy, elegant, flower spikes in glowing tropical pastel shades for garden beds, borders and patio pots. Flowering begins in late spring and continues throughout summer into autumn, so you'll have lots of flowers on hand to bring inside for the kitchen table. Attractive to bees and hummingbirds!



**Digiplexis® Apricot**

Bi-color orange to apricot blooms in spring through fall with cool night temperatures.



**Digiplexis® Flame**

Purple-pink-tipped petals with orange-yellow centers streaked in purple pink with an extended lower petal lobe.



**Digiplexis® Raspberry**

Spectacular spikes of bold raspberry-pink flowers glow in summer.

## Long blooming, eye-catching, Begonia Bossa Nova adds a carnival of color

Brilliant, showy, non-stop flowering makes Begonia Bossa Nova a great choice for adding dramatic color to your garden or patio. This begonia will thrive in any Bay Area climate, particularly in warmer areas. New flowers are constantly being produced on a tidy, yet mounding, cascading habit. Available in 10" hanging baskets in bright colors that cover the plant from late spring, all the way to first frost. Colors available: red, orange, pink, mixed, white, ivory, and Santa Cruz sunset.



Begonia Bossa Nova ivory



Begonia Bossa Nova mixed



Begonia Bossa Nova white

### What exactly are beneficial nematodes?

Beneficial nematodes are microscopic roundworms that work at seeking out and destroying over 200 kinds of soil dwelling and wood boring insects, including grubs, flea and fungus gnat larvae, cutworms, weevils, termites, root knot nematodes and many more. Nematodes move within moist soil and enter a suitable pest host. The nematodes, along with associated bacteria, kill the pest host within a few days. They are an excellent control for gardeners who choose not to use chemicals.



Any pest insects that spend a portion of their developmental stages in the soil are susceptible to beneficial nematode attacks -- which is good for your garden! **Tip Top's** nematodes can be used as a preventative pest management tool throughout the year.



**Grub Busters** nematodes actively seek out grubs in soil and reproduce to provide a lasting natural pest control. Grub Busters nematodes have an easy 3 step application; just open the package, pour the powder into a hose end sprayer (or watering can), fill with water and spray.

### Trap & attract beneficials and pests



#### Honey bee attractant

Honey bee attractant attracts bees to increase pollination and yields of trees, fruit, vegetables, and berries. Contains a blend of select fruit and vegetable flower pheromones that have been found to attract worker bees to potential food sources (flowers).



#### Ladybug attractant

Use ladybug lures throughout the growing season to keep beneficial insects in your garden. Ladybug lure pheromone acts as a natural magnet that tells beneficial insects where to find destructive aphids, whiteflies, and mites, and that can help keep harmful pest populations down.



#### Citrus leaf miner lure trap

Citrus leafminer trap is useful for determining when citrus leaf miner moths are flying and depositing eggs. Citrus leaf miner moths may be captured in traps almost any time during the growing season, but the species is most abundant when citrus is flushing in the summer and fall months. Safe for use with over 200 established flowers, vegetables, trees, and shrubs.

### Join the buzz: Plant for Pollinators May 15<sup>th</sup> through May 25<sup>th</sup>

Celebrate pollinators and beneficial insects May 15<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> at all Sloat Garden Center locations. Plants that attract beneficial insects and pollinators are vital to supporting wildlife, providing healthy watersheds, and maintaining a healthy eco-system. This spring we urge Bay Area gardeners to provide our beneficial and pollinating friends the perennials they need to live, feed, and lay their eggs. Support the Pollinators! See our pollinator friendly plants list: [www.sloatgardens.com](http://www.sloatgardens.com)



## Light up the garden with yellow–pink petunias and osteospermum



**Petunia Lime Bicolor**

Unique bi-color petunia with ruffled blooms and striped lime/pink flower color. This petunia is a standout garden showpiece.



**Petunia Twilight**

Attractive purple-pink blooms. The color changes based on light, heat and flower maturity. Mixes well in containers.



**Osteospermum Blue Eyed Beauty**

Amazing bi-color African daisy with deep purple eye and cheery yellow petals. Re-blooms when cut back.

## Bring hummingbirds into your yard with a feeder filled with nectar

Hummingbirds are a delight as they flash about the garden in their jewel tone plumage. They are brazen for their size and often curious about other living things in “their” space. It is not uncommon for a hummer to stare at you through a window and silently demand that the feeder be refilled.

Hummingbirds will call your garden home if encouraged with nectar plants and a feeder. They’ll regularly visit a feeder once they know it’s there. Be patient. You may have to move it once or twice until you find the best spot.

Moving feeders in winter to “force” hummingbirds to migrate to a warmer location is incorrect. Hummingbird migration is dependent on photoperiod, not food. Remember to keep your hummingbird feeder full of nectar all year.



**Perky Pet and Best-I hummingbird feeders**



Fill your hummingbird feeder with **Best-I Instant Hummingbird Nectar**. This natural powder has no color or preservatives, so it’s a healthy food source for hummingbirds. Mix the powder with hot water to create clear, fresh nectar. Once cooled, the nectar can be used in your feeder.

Place excess nectar in the refrigerator for a fresh and convenient supply.

★ **HOW TO:** *control weeds*

BurnOut kills all types of actively growing weeds and grasses. Made from citrus acid and clove oil that are toxic to weeds, BurnOut is rain-proof when dry and does not spread. It is approved for organic gardening, and is safe for use around people and pets. Use BurnOut on borders, driveways, sidewalks, the

base of mature trees, buildings, fence lines, barns and pastures, school grounds, in greenhouses, and other areas where weed control is needed.

## This just in: Japi pottery for spring



Japi planters are lightweight pots that will add crisp, modern style and function to your deck, yard, patio or indoor spaces.

The planters are made in Sao Paulo, Brazil, from polypresin using a rotational molding process that creates beautiful, lightweight containers. The raw material is non-toxic, UV protected and 100% recyclable. It will not chip or crack when exposed to weather conditions.

## Coleus for shade

Coleus are tropical plants grown for their brilliantly colored leaves. We like them for brightening shady borders, indoor and outdoor pottery or hanging baskets, and for attracting birds and hummingbirds (if allowed to flower). We have an array of coleus colors and combinations available.

### Coleus notes:

- Most perform best in strong indirect light or thin shade.
- The more red pigment the foliage has, the more sun tolerant the plant tends to be.
- Be sure to pinch stems often to encourage branching and a compact habit.
- Coleus will make an excellent addition to mixed container plantings.



**Coleus Kong Lime Sprite**

Huge leaves and unique color combinations on foliage adds interest to shade.



**Coleus Fishnet Stockings**

Striking green and burgundy variegation; heat tolerant. Part shade to shade.



**Coleus Kingswood Torch**

Stunning magenta foliage overlaid with burgundy. Sun or shade.



**Coleus Mariposa**

Variegated red leaves, heat tolerant, adds interest to shade. Part shade to shade.

## Growing roses, houseplants, hydrangeas and tomatoes? Boost your bounty with Maxsea

Maxsea crafts three basic plant food "flavors" in recyclable, re-sealable containers, in 24 oz., 6lb., and 20 lb. sizes. Apply to plants with a Syphonjet Siphon Mixer (*info below*) or watering can.

**Maxsea 16-16-16 All Purpose Plant Food** is designed for year-round use on all indoor and outdoor plants. It promotes vigorous, sturdy growth with distinct, dark-green foliage, quality blossoms, and abundant fruit and vegetables.

**Maxsea 3-20-20 Bloom Plant Food** improves flowering, bud set, bud count, blossom quality, quantity and size on flowering plants, and promotes abundant fruit and vegetable yields.

**Maxsea 14-18-14 Acid Plant Food** is for all acid loving plants. With soil acidifiers, chelated iron and zinc, this formula will acidify alkaline soils, plus correct and prevent chlorosis (yellow foliage). Can be used as a regular food for acid loving plants; it's also an excellent formula to give ailing plants a boost, regardless of pH preferences.



### Apply Maxsea food with Damm Syphonject Siphon Mixer



Fertilize while watering with Damm Syphonject. If you're accustomed to mixing up watering cans full of liquid plant food (and then carrying them around to feed plants), Syphonjet improves the process. Simply water and feed as you go with your hose and waterwand.

**How it works:** The Syphonject draws a concentrated solution from a bucket through a flexible suction tube, and then dilutes it with the passing water stream at an approximate ratio of 20 parts water to 1 part concentrated solution. **To attain the 20 parts fertilizer to part water ratio:** For each gallon of water used, mix in 20 times the manufacturer's recommended rate of fertilizer. For each gallon of concentrated solution you prepare, Syphonject will apply 20 gallons of correctly diluted solution.



## Introducing sub-tropical fruit trees

This spring we're carrying a host of new sub-tropical fruit trees. Try them for a delicious spring and summer.

*Cherimoya Chaffey*  
*Macadamia Cate Seedling*  
*Nopal Cactus*  
*Passiflora Frederick*  
*Strawberry Guava Yellow*  
*Red Malaysian Guava*  
*Tropic White Guava*  
*Tropic Guava Mexican Cream*  
*Jujube Li*  
*Jujube Lang*  
*Sapote Suebelle*



**Cherimoya** tastes like a creamy, smooth and sweet banana-pineapple, with flesh that melts in your mouth. Cherimoya shrubs like a sunny but not too hot location; they will tolerate light frosts and grow best with a chill hour of 50 to 100 hours. They are happiest 3 to 15 miles from the ocean.



**Macadamia** trees are large, spreading evergreen trees with beautiful holly-like green foliage and light red new growth. Macadamia trees grow best in full sun, although in hot climates partial shade can be beneficial. They are attractive trees with very delicious fruit.



Prickly to some, delicious to others. Believe it or not, **Nopal Cactus (Prickly Pear)** is a vegetable, and the pads are edible, as is its fruit. Nopal Cactus also produces a beautiful flower, making it a winner in your garden. Use the fruit for fresh eating, or use it in jams, jellies, and desserts.



**Passiflora 'Frederick'** is a heavy bearer of large oval fruit that's delicious in juices or smoothies. Harvest season is June to frost. Grow the vines against a wall, deck, or on a patio. Any kind of overhead protection provides additional support.



**Guava** is an attractive shrub with heavy-bearing clusters of small, aromatic fruit. The cream-colored fruit is sweet, flavorful, and high in vitamin C. Guava shrubs are excellent for edible landscapes. Plant them as a screen or hedge.



**Jujube** (aka Chinese date). These rounded, reddish-brown fruits are sweet and chewy like dates when fully ripe. The Jujube is a good-looking, slow-growing tree that's drought-resistant and virtually pest and disease-free. An excellent choice for all climates



**Sapote** is a large tree that's semi-everbearing in coastal areas. The Sapote tree produces medium-sized fruits with a rich, creamy, yellow flesh that's white on the inside. Sapote fruit is eaten skin and all. This year we are carrying Sapote Subelle.



Debbie Saffell talks sub-tropical fruit

### Edible Gardening: Sub-tropical fruit basics

Looking to add unique varieties to your edible garden? We recommend growing sub-tropical fruits. Join us as we welcome Debbie Saffell from La Verne Nursery and learn how to grow Guava, Macadamia, Cherimoya, Passion Fruit, Sapote, Nopal Cactus, and Jujube in the Bay Area.

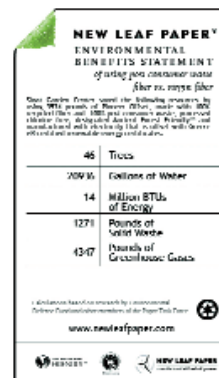
Friday, May 29 – Kentfield at 12 noon

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

Saturday, May 30 – Novato, 1:30 pm

Sunday, May 31 – Sloat Blvd., SF, 10:30 am

Sunday, May 31 – Danville, 1:30 pm



## 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. Free for Rewards Members. \$10 for non-members (membership is 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.*

### Seminar: Learn to Prune Japanese maples

Learn easy-to-implement pruning tips for Japanese maples. Seminar instructor Elizabeth Ruiz is a true pruning professional and a great teacher. This workshop is a MUST if you have Japanese maples. Register in advance. Free for Rewards Members. \$10 for non-members (membership is free!)

Sun., May 3 – Danville, 10:30 am  
Sat., May 9 – Miller Ave., Mill Valley, 10:30 am  
Sat., May 16 – Novato, 10:30 am

### Seminar: How to Attract Good Bugs to your Garden

Good (a.k.a. beneficial) bugs eat the bad bugs that want to eat your plants. Attract beneficial bugs to your garden by attending this seminar by Suzanne Bontempo, an IPM advocate and head of the Our Water Our World program. Perfect for any level of gardener. Register in advance. Free for Rewards Members. \$10 for non-members (membership is free!)

Sat., May 16 – Miller Ave., Mill Valley, 10:30 am  
Sat., May 16 – Danville, 1:30 pm  
Sun., May 17 – Novato, 10:30 am  
Wed., May 20 – Kentfield, 12 noon  
Sun., May 24 – Sloat Blvd., SF, 10:30 am

### Make & Take Workshop: Plant up an Edible Container

Edibles in containers make great use of small spaces, are nice for table centerpieces, and are a perfect gift for yourself or a friend. Our container design expert Jen Strobel will show you how to create beautiful containers with edible plants; and you'll leave with a container you've planted! Register in advance. \$40/\$35 for Rewards Members

Wed., June 3 – Sloat Blvd., San Francisco, 12 noon  
Thurs., June 4 – Novato, 12 noon  
Fri., June 5 – Kentfield, 12 noon  
Sun., June 7 – Miller Ave., Mill Valley, 10:30 am  
Sun., June 7 – Danville, 10:30 am (w/Dustin)



## On location with Steve Mauricio and the San Rafael Sloat Garden Center staff



Staff: Steve, Shelley, Luis and Koutara

### What makes this location so special?

Our store truly is an oasis away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. As soon as you step through the gates you get that cottage garden, oasis feel. The store's pathways lead you through so many nooks and crannies, fragrance to fragrance, destination to destination.

### Please tell us about your staff.

We have a knowledgeable and energetic staff that lives and breathes plants. There are two CCNP's (California Certified Nursery Professionals) on site (Steve and Shelley). I manage the nursery and am the main nursery buyer, and Shelley is the creator of all the dramatic displays, as well as the rose professional on the team. She does an amazing job keeping our roses happy and healthy until they're adopted by their new owners.

### What is your favorite/most useful tool?

One of my favorite tools is the famous "Hori-Hori". I love this tool's convenience and effectiveness so much that I use it more than a shovel. It can be used to dig holes, break up soil, amend soil, and weed. Truly a multi-purpose tool.

### What is your favorite plant?

One of my favorite plants is *Boronia megastigma* 'Jack Maguire's Red' for its immense fragrance. Shelley's favorite plants are roses.



### What do you like about your job?

I started in this industry studying orchids and 30+ years later, my love has evolved over a vast amount of plants. I love vibrant happy colors and fragrant plants. One of my daily enjoyments at Sloat Garden Center is having the opportunity to build new relationships and reinforcing current ones with the members of our community.



Hori Hori Digging Tool