

Gardener's Notebook

Volume 35, No. 2

News & Advice for Bay Area Gardeners

Spring 2021



Zucchini squash plants will produce delicious fruit summer through fall.



Basil is an excellent summertime herb for pestos, salads, and soups. So simple to grow in the warm sunshine.



Tomatoes right off the vine are a small slice of heaven. Learn how to grow award winning tomatoes with our guide.



Plant a fresh and tasty salsa garden with **peppers**, tomatoes, green onions, and cilantro.

The Kitchen Gardener Plants Vegetables

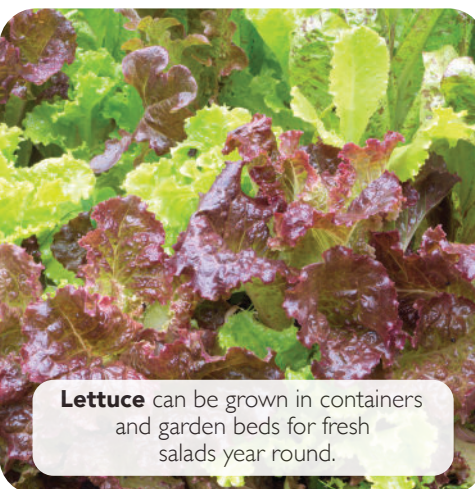
Locally source your own organic food by growing it yourself. Whether you need vegetable starts or seeds, Sloat Garden Center carries everything you need to succeed in the garden this spring and summer. Follow along with our kitchen garden guides and learn how!



Cilantro can be planted in a garden bed or container. Grow it for your salsa garden!



Green Beans grow as bushes or climbing vines. Most are easy to grow from seed or start.



Lettuce can be grown in containers and garden beds for fresh salads year round.



Beets produce edible leaves in addition to fleshy roots, and both are delectable. The time to plant beets is now!



How to grow squash (including pumpkins!)

For the squash lovers among us, it's time to get planting! **Summer squash** is grown for warm weather harvest and picked when immature. Pattypan, yellow crookneck, zucchini, or Italian squash are good examples of summer squash.

The other type is **winter squash**; it's grown for harvest in late summer or fall. The fruits have hard rinds and are harvested when mature. Winter squash will store well in a cool, dry location for 1 to 6 months. Good examples are acorn, butternut, buttercup, delicata, spaghetti, pumpkin, and hubbard varieties.

Squashes are large, vining plants that need ample growing space, but a container, such as a wine barrel, can work for bush varieties. Winter squash need more growing space than summer squash; both perform best in full sun and planted in fertile, well-drained soils that contain high levels of organic matter.

Plant squash on mounds in multiples for best pollination. Roots need regular moisture, but leaves and stems should be kept as dry as possible to prevent leaf and fruit diseases. Sprinkling in *E.B. Stone Organics Fruit & Vegetable Food*, along with a layer of bark between the leaves and soil, will help prevent leaf and fruit diseases. Squash will continue to bear fruit for weeks after initial harvest.

How to grow basil

Basil craves heat, so growing it May through August is ideal.

Use *Sloat Organic Planting Mix* when planting basil in the ground and *Sloat Organic Potting Soil* in containers. Basil needs heat plus bright sunlight (at least 6 hours a day) and thrives with frequent water and well-drained soil.

Growing successive rounds of basil starts or seeds will provide a steady, fresh supply for pesto, soups, and salads.

grow pesto

Pesto is essentially a basic formula of 4 ingredients: greens + oil + cheese + nuts. Traditional pesto utilizes basil, but arugula or kale pesto is equally delicious.

See favorite recipes from the garden in the Sloat Recipe Box www.sloatgardens.com

Dear Garden Guru,

Each spring I plant zucchini it flowers, but I don't get fruit. Any suggestions?

— Erin in Pleasant Hill

Squash, melons, and cucumbers are all members of the Cucurbit family. These plants bear two kinds of flowers, male and female, both on the same plant. Both types of flowers are required to produce fruit.

At the beginning of the season, male flowers are produced first, then female flowers are produced three weeks later (the female flower has the bulbous fruit in back). When temperatures rise, female flowers appear and with the help of bees, pollination can begin. Patience should bear some fruit.

Grow your own groceries summer through fall

Cool weather vegetables are most successful if matured when temps are mild and cool.

	May	June	July	Aug
beets	●	●	●	●
broccoli			●	●
Brussels sprouts	●	●	●	●
cabbage				●
carrots				●
cauliflower				●
celery			●	●
chard & kale	●	●	●	●
kohlrabi			●	●
lettuce	●	●	●	●
onions				
parsnips	●			●
peas				●
potatoes	●	●		●
radishes	●	●	●	●
rutabaga				●
spinach			●	●
turnips				●

Warm weather vegetables want both warm soil and very warm temperatures.

	May	June	July	Aug
beans	●	●	●	●
corn	●	●	●	
cucumber	●	●		
eggplant	●	●		
melon*	●	●		
peppers*	●	●		
pumpkins	●	●		
squash, summer	●	●	●	
squash, winter	●	●		
tomatoes	●	●		
watermelon*	●	●		

Learn how to grow a bounty of produce this spring (including tomatoes!) with our 47 Kitchen Gardener planting guides:

www.sloatgardens.com.

Come in to Sloat Garden Center for the best fruits, vegetables, and herbs to plant in your Bay Area micro-climate.

* Successful if grown in the warmest parts of the Bay Area



Growing your own groceries?

Companion plants like Nasturtium, Alyssum, Zinnia, and Marigold will give beneficial bugs plenty of food sources to do their important work – which is eating pest bugs around food crops.



Monica at our Kentfield store planted up this colorful pot full of flowers, herbs, and vegetables. She used Sloat Organic Potting Soil, E.B. Stone Organics Sure Start, along with Chard, Thyme, Alyssum, and Marigolds.



Our locally made **Organic Potting Soil** has been formulated for Bay Area growing conditions and is specifically intended to help plants succeed in outdoor containers.

It provides excellent drainage and is resistant to compaction, which means it stays loose and offers better air circulation to plant roots. This ready-to-use mix is an ideal medium for flowers, vegetables, houseplants and ornamentals in containers, indoors or out.

Grow your own Salsa



Make salsa with organic ingredients you grow yourself. Our planting recipe brings together tomatoes, peppers, cilantro, and onions for an easy and fresh tasting salsa.

Planting list

- **3 pepper plants.** Some gardeners like their salsa spicy, but if you enjoy mild flavors, try planting sweet peppers.
- **2 tomato plants.** Choose large, paste-type tomato varieties like Italian Roma, Supremo, San Marzano, Speckled Roman, or Oxheart. There's plenty of time to plant 50-60 day tomatoes for harvest later this summer.
- **2 cilantro plants.** Sow or plant this fresh tasting herb every 3 weeks so that it's always on hand.
- **2 tomatillo plants.** Tomatillos are essential for creating tangy, lime-flavored tomatillo salsa.
- **green onions.** Experiment with planting onions; all variety stems can be used as scallions.
- **Sloat Organic Planting Mix** for the ground, or **Sloat Organic Potting Soil** for containers.
- **Use E.B. Stone Organics Sure Start** when you plant vegetables.
- **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** to keep moisture in and pests away.
- **Feed plants with E.B. Stone Organics Tomato & Vegetable Food** every month.



Get your tomato and pepper plants caged at planting time or right after. Once plants get large, it'll be too late!



Sweet and hot pepper plants have arrived in our stores. Plant them soon!

How to Grow Peppers

Peppers need a long growing season and warm temperatures to blossom and then fruit (60 to 95 days from plant to harvest). May and June are ideal months to get them started! There are two pepper types: sweet and hot. Hot peppers grow best in warm areas, whereas sweet peppers are able to thrive in cooler, foggy climates.

How to Grow Tomatoes & Tomatillos

Tomatoes can be grown in containers planted in *Sloat Organic Potting Soil* (or in the ground mixed with *Sloat Loam Builder*). Plant deeply so that the first set of leaves are just above the soil level. Remember to stake or cage tomato plants to guide new growth. Tomatoes need full sun (8 hours +) and grow best with infrequent but deep watering. Younger plants will need more water as they develop root systems.

How to Grow Cilantro

Cilantro can be tucked into beds or planted in a pot close to the kitchen door. Well-drained soil is essential. If drainage is poor, work in plenty of organic matter. Cilantro likes 6 to 8 hours of full sun (foggy sun will do). Replant throughout summer for a continuous crop since it grows quickly. Keep pinched back. Cilantro will bolt (flower), then go to seed as temperatures rise. Cilantro flowers are a food source for beneficial insects, so keep it growing. After insects pollinate flowering cilantro, the seed (coriander) can be used in the kitchen or replanted.



Generations of Pottery at Sloat Garden Center



Sloat Garden Center is the largest independent pottery importer in the U.S., connecting talented pottery makers and their beautiful pots with independent garden centers throughout North America.

Over his five decades in the garden center business, Sloat Garden Center owner Dave Straus has traveled to and worked with pottery factories from around the world. Through pottery selection and design,

Dave has created close relationships with an extended family of pottery makers who continue to supply our stores today.

When the pandemic hit, our shelves were already stocked with pottery from our long standing relationships. Over the last year we've sourced extra pots from our family of pottery makers to ensure we have enough for Bay Area gardeners and beyond. Stop in and see our selection!



Introducing Sloat Gardening Videos



Watch local gardening professionals and expert Sloat staff, including Izzy above, teach our gardening webinars and quick tip how-to videos. Scan code above to view!



Make gardening easier!

Expandable hoses are lightweight and easy to use

Kneeling pads make gardening more comfortable

Protect your hands with West County gloves

Make sure your hands and knees are comfortable while gardening with West County gloves and Sloat kneeling pads. Our expandable, lightweight hoses make watering easier on your body.



WaterWise Solutions

Mulch!

Soaker hose

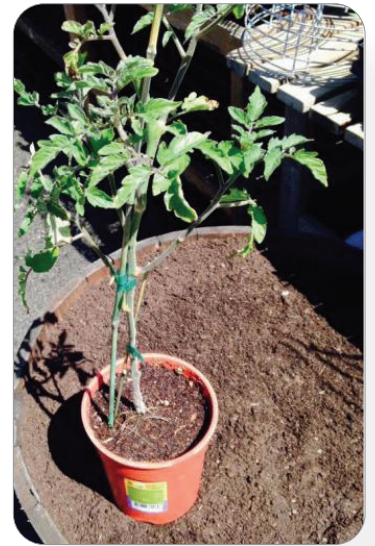
Watering Wands

WaterWise tips Improve water efficiency for a healthy & beautiful garden

1. Use soaker hoses to let water seep in. For all hoses and water bibs: replace worn hose washers to prevent leaks.
2. Make sure irrigation equipment is functioning properly and is the right system for the job.
3. Use water shut off valves on hoses and watering wands so that water is not wasted as you move about the garden.
4. Mulch! Apply a 1" – 3" layer of organic material (like bark or compost), over soaker hoses and exposed soil in planting beds, containers, and shrub borders.
5. Use Damm One Touch 16" and 30" watering wands to help put water where you want it.

How to plant almost any outdoor plant in 8 steps

We're frequently asked about the correct way to plant an outdoor plant. Follow these steps to successfully grow annuals, perennials, shrubs, vines, and trees all year long!



1. **Determine whether** the location of your planting is in full sun, shade, morning sun only or afternoon sun only. Giving a plant its preferred light requirements will eliminate 50% of potential insect and disease problems.
2. **If planting multiple plants**, the entire planting area should first be covered with the appropriate soil amendment (determine the coverage/area from the back of the bag).
3. **Dig holes** as deep as the container and twice as wide. Do not leave potting holes with slick, impenetrable sides.
4. **Put a small mound** of the mixed earth at the bottom of the drained hole and add a pre-plant fertilizer (such as *E. B. Stone Organics SureStart*) to create a nutrient web around the plant's roots.
5. **Remove the plant** from its container by turning the pot over and gently tapping the bottom of the pot or squeezing its sides. Do not grasp the plant by its stem or top or pull upward -- this could separate the plant from its roots.
6. **It is necessary** to "rough up" the root ball by gently tearing the sides to form a "fuzzy" ball of soil and root. You can also do this by scoring the sides with a tool to break up the root ball into a more amorphous shape. Please note that Daphne, Bougainvillea and Citrus are sensitive to being roughed up, so please be gentle.
7. **Set the prepared plant** in the hole on the small mound of soil added earlier. Spread the roots out and over the mound. Fill the hole fully with the mixed soil. The plant should sit slightly higher than the hole to allow for settling when watered.
8. **Water the plant** thoroughly, starting from the outside, working in toward the center. Once the water has percolated into the soil, water again. Check soil every other day for the first few weeks to ensure the soil closest to the plant is not dry.



Food for thought

E.B. Stone Organics fertilizers contain humic acids and beneficial soil microbes (including mycorrhizal fungi) for long-lasting plant success. E.B. Stone Organics fertilizers make a difference on plant growth.

A few moments in our Martinez store...



Our Martinez location has blossomed after a complete metamorphosis. The store has new walkways, plant shade structures, and a new directional flow. Manager Pete and Assistant Manager Shannon worked hard to re-configure the space so that it reflects Martinez gardener's interests.

"We tried to make it a serene and park-like guided tour through all the plant possibilities for your garden, featuring staple favorites as well as introductions to plants that are new and cool," explains Shannon.

Pete and Shannon feel that recent house-plant trends have introduced a whole new generation of people to gardening, including kids. They both enjoy helping area children find plants, as well as the store's fish tank aquarium.

"The Martinez community is hands-on and amazing -- they are really open to gardening information and want to learn. It tickles me to see this whole genre of new gardeners," she explains.

"Tell me where the sun is in your yard, and we can work backward to figure out what you should plant."
- Shannon at Sloat Martinez



The team enjoys talking to gardeners about growing basics like sunlight, water, and soil – all essentials in their book.

"Part of our advice is to teach gardeners how to grow their soil to make it as fruitful as possible so whatever you're planting will thrive. You get healthy plants when you have healthy soil. It sounds ridiculous to grow soil, but it's really how to create a healthy, bountiful growing medium. That's where all the life comes from," says Shannon.



Bee-Friendly Gardening Tips:

1. Always spray miticides or insecticides late in the afternoon or early evening after bees and other beneficial insects have stopped foraging (and also to prevent leaf burn in the heat of the day).
2. Most native bees are solitary ground nesters and will not build nests under thick layers of mulch. Try not to mulch all areas, leaving some bare soil.

May & June Gardening Webinars

Each season our skilled team members and local gardening professionals teach webinars in our popular gardening education series. Webinars are free to attend!

Eco-Friendly Pest & Disease Mgmt – May 1 at 10am
Growing Peppers 101 – May 15 at 10am
Growing Succulents 101 – May 22 at 10am
How to Grow Berries – May 29 at 10am
Summer Garden Cocktails – June 9 at 5pm
Container Gardening – June 19 at 10am

See sloatgardens.com for details to join our scheduled Zoom Webinars



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

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327 3rd Ave between
Geary & Clement
(415) 752-1614

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

3237 Pierce Street
Chestnut & Lombard
(415) 440-1000

Pierce: 9am-6:30pm

Novato

2000 Novato Blvd.
(415) 897-2169

Kentfield

700 Sir Francis Drake Bl.
(415) 454-0262

Mill Valley

657 E. Blithedale
(415) 388-0102

401 Miller Ave.
(415) 388-0365

Pleasant Hill

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(925) 939-9000

Martinez

6740 Alhambra Ave
(925) 935-9125

Concord

1555 Kirker Pass Rd.
(925) 681-0550

Danville

800 Camino Ramon (in the
Rose Garden Center)
(925) 837-9144

828 Diablo Road
at El Cerro
(925) 743-0288

M-Sat hours: 8am-6:30pm

Sun hours: 9am-5pm

Garden Design Department

401 Miller Ave.,
Mill Valley (415) 388-3754

Bulk Soils

828 Diablo Road at El Cerro
(925) 820-1273

(East Bay delivery only)

M-Sat hours: 8am-4pm

Visit us on the web: www.sloatgardens.com

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

(or as noted above)

Don't forget Mother's Day (May 9th)
& Father's Day (June 20th)

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We'll help you grow the plants you love!

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What to do in the Garden

Plant

- ☞ Plant Petunia, Marigold, Begonia, Lobelia, Salvia, Zinnia, Verbena, Bacopa, Calibrachoa, Ipomoea and Coleus.
- ☞ It's time to plant pumpkins, sunflowers, peppers, basil, tomatoes & melons.
- ☞ Select garden-ready Dahlias, perennials, Hydrangeas, and hanging baskets.
- ☞ Re-seed or transplant salad greens, green beans, radish, carrots, beets, cilantro, and kale.



Fertilize

- ☞ Fertilize Rhododendrons, Azaleas and Camellias with **E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food**.
- ☞ Boost vegetables with **E.B. Stone Organics Tomato and Vegetable Food**.
- ☞ Use a time-release fertilizer such as **Osmocote** for your container plants.
- ☞ Feed spring plantings with all-purpose fertilizers such as **E.B. Stone Organics** and **Maxsea**.

Prune/Maintain

- ☞ Prune spring-flowering shrubs after their bloom is past.
- ☞ Mulch shrubs, vegetable and flower beds with **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** to control weeds and conserve moisture.
- ☞ Release ladybugs and other beneficial insects to help control aphids, mites, whiteflies, and other garden pests.
- ☞ 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 a **needle-nose snip**.
- ☞ 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.



See our full garden guide:
sloatgardens.com



May & June



Join our **FREE Gardener's Reward Program** and you'll enjoy:

☐ **New quick rewards:** Receive a \$5 coupon for every 200 points you earn. Each dollar spent earns one (1) point.

☐ **Promotions:** Advance invitations to gardening events by postal mail or email.

☐ **Gardener's Notebook:** FREE subscription to this Gardener's Notebook newsletter and our online monthly and seasonal gardening tips.

All Sloat Garden Center locations are open for in-store shopping with safety protocols in place. The number of customers allowed in some of our stores is limited. Masks plus 6-foot physical distancing is required.

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