

# Gardener's Notebook





# April is the Best Month to Plant Tomatoes!

We're stocked with your favorite, locally grown cherry, sauce, and slicer tomatoes that will thrive in Marin County, San Francisco, and the East Bay. Whether you garden in cool and foggy Inner Richmond or warm and dry Danville, each of our stores has the right tomatoes for your unique microclimate. Stop in!

# **Dan's Top 5 Tomato Growing Tips**



Potting

Soil

E.B. Stone

Sure

Dan, vegetable guru at our Mill Valley, Miller Avenue location, teaches gardeners to grow food in his popular gardening webinars. We asked Dan to share his tips for growing delicious tomatoes. Learn more by tuning in to Dan's How to Grow Tomatoes webinar on April 8th at 10am.

- 1. Mix in organic matter (Sloat Compost, Sloat Planting Mix, Sloat Loam Builder) if planting in soil beds, and use good quality potting soil in containers. (Dan's favorite soil for containers is Sloat Organic Potting Soil).
- 2. Mix in a balanced fertilizer at the time of planting to be sure nutrients are available to the plant's roots. Dan likes to use E.B. Stone Organics Sure Start.
- 3. Choose varieties based on your climate. Always grow at least one "Sungold" tomato. Dan says they're the sweetest! See our tomato variety recommendations by scanning the QR code below or visiting sloatgardens.com
- 4. Give your plants plenty of space— at least 2' apart in the ground or 15 gallons of volume in a container. Use a cage for support as they grow.
- 5. Feed growing plants during the season with E.B. Stone Organics Tomato & Vegetable Food.

Read more about Growing Tomatoes!





**Give veggie plants** a giant start with 420 **Recharge Fertilizer** 

We recommend Recipe 420 **Recharge** fertilizer to support plant growth. This natural and organic formulation revitalizes nutrient-deficient soil and gives plants a boost during periods of vegetative growth. Recipe 420 Recharge includes beneficial bacteria and mycorrhizae, plus Strep-



tomyces lydicus, to help prevent root rot pathogens and blight. It's a favorite choice for growing veggies because it works!

# Fresh, homegrown food begins with quality soil

Vegetable gardeners aim for "loamy" soil; light and rich but not too heavy with clay, or loose with sand. This ideal soil can be achieved by adding amendments that allow air and water to penetrate the root zone. For growing vegetables in the ground, we recommend amending with Sloat Loam Builder as it excels in soil preparation, especially if



your soil contains clay. The blend of aged chicken manure, redwood bark, and compost enhances bacterial action and improves fertility. It also breaks down quickly supplying readily available nutrients at once.





# Plant a Salad Bowl Garden

Craving healthy food but short on space? Plant up a salad bowl and feast on herbs and lettuce greens year-round. All you need is a container, Sloat potting soil, plus starter plants or seeds. Your all-in-one mini-food garden will thrive on a sunny balcony, small patio, or windowsill.

"Salad bowls are an awesome way to have seasonal greens, fresh and available for your summer dishes," says Taylor, Assistant Manager at our Sloat Blvd SF location (and creator of the pot pictured above.) "I love being able to grow the varieties I want, and it's comforting to know what's going into them. Grown from seedling or seed, let's face it, home grown food always tastes better!"

#### Salad Bowl Garden Ingredients

- Shallow terracotta or glazed pot
- Lettuce, arugula, kale, chard starter plants
- Tasty herbs make great companion plants
- Sloat Organic Potting Soil
- E.B. Stone Organics Sure Start

Harvest leaves from your salad bowl frequently to encourage more growth. Learn more veggie & herb planter ideas by tuning into our **Summer** Herb Planter webinar on June 3rd at 10am.

Spring 2023

# **Spring & Summer Vegetable Planting Timeline**

# Fresh Food from the Garden: Grow your Own Groceries!

Use our Bay Area 12-month chart at right to discover the right time to plant your favorite veggies.

Each week we restock our supply of fresh, locally grown organic vegetable and herb starter plants that will thrive in your microclimate.

	Crop	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
ı	Beans				•	•	•	•	•					
	Corn				•	•	•	•						
	Cucumber				•	•	•							
	Eggplant*				•	•	•	•						
ř	Melon*					•	•							
	Peppers*					•	•							
۹	Pumpkins					•	•							
ı	Squash, summer				•	•	•	•						
ı	Squash, winter					•	•							
	Tomatoes				•	•	•							
	Watermelon*					•	•							
								_						

**Support your Veggies** As veggies grow, they need support. Our 33" cages are ideal for supporting peppers, eggplants, and beans. For larger plants like tomatoes, squash, peas, and cucumbers,

> we recommend our 54" heavy gauge wire cages or sturdy

inverted step cages. All Sloat

Garden Center cages are made

in the U.S. with American steel.

Get Greener, More Vibrant Plant Growth with Maxsea



In the 20+ years we've carried Maxsea fertilizers, we've seen gardeners become quick converts to seaweed's energizing effects on plants. Soluble and fast-acting, seaweed granules dissolve quickly in water to support lush, healthy plant growth indoors and outside. Maxsea encourages vigorous growth and beautiful blooms with deep green foliage and abundant yields. We carry all three types: All Purpose, Bud & Bloom, and Acid Plant Food.



Will not thrive in cool areas\*

# Five California Native Plants that Bay Area Pollinators Love

There are hundreds of native plant species that can thrive in your garden while also supporting local pollinators. Here are five staff favorites that birds, bees, and butterflies adore.

Arctostaphylos (Manzanita) is a picturesque plant known for its smooth mahogany red bark and crooked branches. In the winter and early spring, urn shaped white-pink flowers appear, followed by berry-like red or brown fruit that attract birds. Arctostaphylos can thrive almost everywhere as both a ground cover and a tree-like shrub, tolerating rocky, sandy, acidic, or rich heavy soils. Fun fact: Arctostaphylos regulates its nectar to attract different butterflies and insects at different times throughout the day.

Artemesia (Wormwood) is a go-to California native with soft, silvery, fragrant foliage. Artemesia prefers full sun and well-draining soil; it won't be happy in a shady, wet spot. We especially love Artemesia in moon gardens.

**Eriogonum (Buckwheat)** is a California native perennial subshrub that produces fluffy pink or white puffballs in dense clusters that attract native bees. It is sun-loving, pest and disease-resistant, drought-tolerant, easy care, and wind-tolerant. This diverse genus contains species that occur in challenging environments from dunes to deserts.

Our beloved native **Ceanothus** provides much needed pollen and nectar to native pollinators. Birds relish the small seeds that ripen in the fall and rely on the sturdy foliage for shelter. Gardeners love Ceanothus for its textured foliage and stunning purple or blue flowers. Many Ceanothus varieties have a sweet fragrance, hence the common name California Lilac. These plants are ideally adapted to our short winter rainy season and dry summers. Can thrive on little or no irrigation after the first season.

**Achillea millefolium (Yarrow)** is a small western native perennial with feathery foliage and lacy flowers. Achillea attracts pollinators and has been used as an herbal remedy for millennia. It's deer resistant and a frequent component of butterfly gardens. Plant in full sun near the coast, or part shade if you're inland. Can be used as a lawn replacement.

> Generate a list of native plants for your growing conditions and zip code with Calscape.org's database.







# April, May & June Gardening Webinars

Join us for free online gardening lessons taught by our skilled professionals and local experts! Webinar recordings are available on our website 3 days after the scheduled run time. Zoom in live or visit our video library to view past webinars and quick tip planting videos.

**How to Grow Tomatoes** April 8, 10am

Welcoming Native Wildlife to the Garden April 15, 10am

Click to sign up for Webinars

**How to Grow Peppers** May 6, 10am

What to do in your garden this Spring May 20, 10am

Create an Herb Planter for Summer June 3, 10am



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# 5 Easy-Care Houseplant Picks for Your Indoor Garden



Aglaonema. There are a dazzling number of Aglaonema varieties available, and all are prized for their foliage. These lovely plants will survive in darker areas of your home. Easy care.



tropical plant with clusters of large, variegated leaves is a staff favorite. Dieffenbachia can thrive in darker areas but also appreciates bright indirect light.

We have so many easy-care, low-maintenance, indoor plants in all shapes and sizes. Group them to create layers of lush foliage and vibrant tones for a truly peaceful space. Here are 5 of our favorite houseplants.



Calathea are charming, stylish, and hip, and they're also abundant in our stores! We love their foliage variations; stripes, dots, and patterns in shades of green, white or pink. Calathea need high humidity and warm, bright, indirect light.



Variegated Pothos. This popular trailing plant will enhance indoor spaces with its variegated leaves. Pothos grows well in low light, but the variegation will really pop if it gets a bit of sun. Train the vines to wrap around a stake, a shelf, or bookcase.



Philodendron Brasil. An easy care, vining Philodendron with vibrant green variegation. "Philodendron Brasil is the perfect combination of an exotic beauty with low maintenance ease," explains Katie, houseplant buyer at our Pleasant Hill store. "A cascade of gorgeous variegation on heart-shaped leaves means no two plants are the same."

# 5 Indoor Plant Care Tips

- 1. Use Sloat Organic Indoor Potting Soil; a rich, well-draining planting medium. "Just like vitamins alone can't replace eating healthy food, fertilizer alone won't replace the need for healthy soil," says Cindy, Assistant Manager at our Sloat Blvd. location.
- 2. Most houseplants thrive with bright, indirect light.
- 3. Planters should have a drainage hole and saucer so that water can drain. Using a **Keeper Stopper Screens** will help the soil to stay in the pot.
- 4. Occasionally dust or rinse your plant's foliage to prevent mites.
- 5. Learn when it's time to repot your houseplant. Scan code at right for our tips!



# **April Garden Checklist**

☐ Grow your own organic groceries this summer. Now is the time to plant tomatoes, herbs, zucchini and berries. Use a soaker hose and mulch to conserve water in your vegetable garden. ☐ Start planning your summer flower garden and bouquets. Great summer annuals for the Bay Area are: Lobelia, Begonia, Impatiens, Marigolds, Cosmos, Petunias, Snapdragon, and Alyssum. Perennials: Penstemon, Salvia, Dahlia, and Argyranthemum.

#### Prune/Maintain

- ☐ Prevent powdery mildew and rust on roses and other plants with Bonide Neem Oil. Already have a powdery mildew problem? Treat it with Monterey Complete Disease Control. ☐ Stop aphids with Bonide Neem Oil.
- ☐ Snails and slugs are hatching in your garden right now. Use Non-toxic Sluggo or Sluggo Plus to control them.
- Release ladybugs, praying mantis, and other beneficial insects to help control aphids, mites, whiteflies, and other garden pests. If you release beneficial insects, don't spray for garden pests.

#### Fertilize

Replenish your stock of fertilizers from E.B. Stone (they're locally made for the Bay Area!). The "Naturals" and "Organics" lines are pet and environmentally safe choices to help each specific plant group in your garden thrive.

# Cindy's Planty Wisdom: Feed your Houseplants!



Sloat Blvd. store Assistant Manager Cindy is our indoor plant guru, and she loves dishing up houseplant advice.

"When a plant is indoors, its only source of additional nutrients is you! Fertilizing is like taking a multi vitamin. It helps boost a plant's growth, root production, and overall health because potting soil only holds a certain amount of nutrients, and those wash away over time," says Cindy. "Maxsea All-Purpose and **Tappin' Roots** are the best and the easiest houseplant fertilizers to use. I always recommend them."



# **4 Adaptable Shrubs for Every Yard**

Presenting four excellent shrubs that are adaptable to a variety of Bay Area microclimates and growing conditions. They'll thrive planted just about anywhere!



Coleonema smells wonderful when you brush up against it. This spreading shrub is a citrus relative has scented foliage, wispy soft, bright foliage and tiny, cute pink blooms in spring and fall. Needs full sun or light shade and very little or no summer watering once established. The perfect choice to add delicate texture, fragrance, and color to the landscape.



tions. Hardy and tall, Westringia can

also be used as a screening plant.



Cistus, also known as Rockrose, is a carefree shrub that bears a profusion of showy flowers attractive to butterflies from spring into early summer. It tolerates poor soil, cold winds, and even some neglect! Cistus foliage is fragrant on warm days and worth planting for this feature alone. "Cistus can take the heat and is super drought tolerant in Mediterranean climates," explains Elio, Assistant Manager and shrub expert at our Novato store.

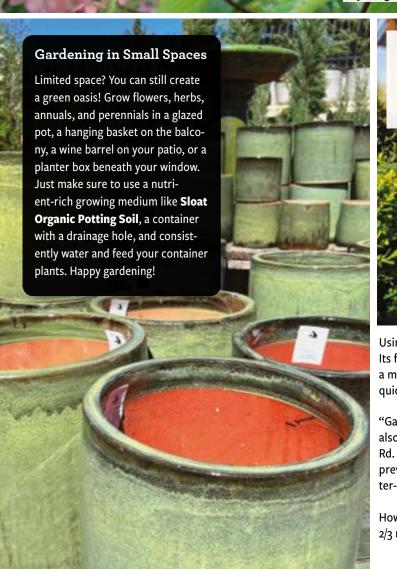


Polygala, also known as Sweet Pea Shrub, features copious, purple-magenta, sweet pea-like flowers that adorn its compact gray-green foliage for most of the year. This wonderful plant will look fantastic in groups, planted in containers, or mixed into a perennial garden. "Polygala is a great choice for a pop of color in the yard and they bloom forever!" says Elio."I've also seen them as cut flowers, plus their foliage is interesting too."



# Plant a Gem in your Garden Hydrangea paniculata Hydrangea paniculata is the easiest to grow, most adaptable, and most drought tolerant of all Hydrangea types. This beautiful species is adapted to Bay Area microclimates and can be grown in containers and garden beds. Their light needs are flexible. We love Hydrangea paniculata's large, lush, conical blossoms and the subtly changing flower colors (from white to pink) through late summer and fall. Whether you plant them in groups, in borders or as single plants, when Hydrangeas bloom, you have a backyard bouquet. Hydrangea paniculata Limelight







Using **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** helps improve soil in several important ways. Its fir bark content adds long-lasting organic matter to invigorate soil. As a mulch, it's a Waterwise aid that prevents moisture from evaporating too quickly, keeps roots cooler, and suppresses weeds.

"Gardeners tell us they love Forest Mulch Plus because of the instant and also long-term benefits," explains Shannon, Manager of our Danville, Diablo Rd. store. "Most gardeners use it for immediate water retention and weed prevention, but as soil decomposes over time, gardeners also enjoy the better-quality planting areas created by more organic material and less clay."

How much do you need? When planting, mix 1/3 Sloat Forest Mulch Plus with 2/3 native soils. To provide a boost to existing beds, apply a 2-inch layer.



# Build your Space: Plant Screens for Privacy

You can create a private outdoor space with strategically placed foliage-filled trees and shrubs. Trellises, hanging baskets, and shrubs in lightweight pots can also work as natural privacy barriers. These plants don't have to be high – they just need to create volume.

Elio, Assistant Manager at our Novato location, has three go-to suggested screening plants for year-round screening and adaptability to Bay Area gardens, patios, and balconies. All are dense, easily pruned, mostly drought tolerant, and do well in multiple Bay Area microclimates.

#### Pittosporum tenuifolium

"Pittosporum is one of our most popular screening plants. They make ideal screening shrubs because they're so easy to prune," explains Elio. "Pittosporum comes in a variety of colors, some with silvery leaves that look awesome in the wind, and others that look almost like Boxwood. There's a Pittosporum out there for everyone!"

Pittosporum can easily be kept trimmed to shape and size. It grows well in full sun to part shade. The glossy foliage is excellent for flower arrangements.



#### Dodonaea viscosa 'Purpurea' (Hopseed bush)

"Dodonaea is definitely one of my favorites!" explains Elio. "It's grown for its dense, green/bronze foliage that turns purple in cooler weather."

Dodonaea can be kept trimmed to shape and size (though they can reach 15-20 ft high if left unpruned). Once established, Dodonaea is drought-tolerant, but it's best to water it regularly and add mulch. It's fast-growing and deer-resistant, making it perfect for screening and privacy.

#### Trachelospermum jasminoides (Star Jasmine)

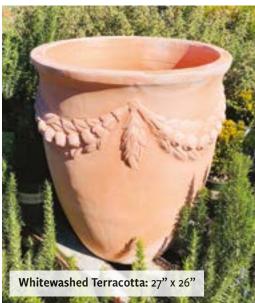
Star Jasmine is a versatile, shrubby vine that offers privacy and perfume. It's popular for its abundant and spectacular white fragrant flowers. Plant Star Jasmine with support in containers, or train it over a trellis, drape it over windows or train it on an arbor where it will offer filtered sunlight and privacy. Prune annually to control the size. "Jasmine is an all-in-one great plant that offers privacy," says Elio.

Visit your neighborhood Sloat to find just the right screening plants for your space.

# Make a Statement with Extra-Large Pottery

Gardeners and designers have requested them and they're finally in stock. Sloat now carries several different extra-large statement pots! These planters are significantly larger than our other pottery and will make a dramatic impact in entryways, on decks or patios, on either side of a large gate, or even in commercial spaces. We carry a selection of statement pots at most Sloat locations except for our 3rd Ave., Pierce St., and Miller Ave. stores.

Spring 2023





Click to see

the pots!







# **Plant Height Solution: Use the Lift Kit**

Elevate smaller plantings to the perfect height in a bigger pot with the **Lift Kit Planter** Insert. This insert features a telescoping pole that allows for adjustable height options. Simply place the Lift Kit in your larger container, adjust the height, and place the smaller pot of flowers or hanging baskets on top. Easily change plantings by season or quickly freshen your patio for a party.





## These Beetles are Good Bugs

About 200 "lady beetle" species occur in California. While adults will feed on aphids, thrip, mealybug and other soft-bodied pests, their diet is more nectar and pollen based. It's predominantly the larvae, nonadult forms that are predators and feed on insect pests.

This spring, keep an eye out for the tiny Psyllobora beetle, one of the many "lady beetles" in the Bay Area. This beneficial insect feeds on powdery mildew and nectar. If you look closely, you can see this 1-2 mm (about 0.08 in) beetle feasting on nectar in the small blossoms of white alyssum. They are cream to beige with black spots. Finding them provides a wonderful opportunity to share your love of gardening with the next generation.

# Staff Picks: Our Most Popular Hand Tools to Make Gardening Easier



### **Hori Hori Digging Knife**

Our staff uses the Hori Hori Digging Knife for all gardening tasks, including digging holes, dividing perennials, cutting roots, removing plants from their containers, breaking up clay, amending soil, transplanting, and removing stubborn weeds.

"One of my favorite tools is the famous Hori-Hori," says Steve, Manager of our Mill Valley, Miller Ave store. "I love its convenience and effectiveness so much that I use it more than a shovel. It's truly a multi-purpose tool."



## **Trowel & Transplanter**

Every gardener needs a trowel and transplanter; they're truly essential tools. Our trowel is a go-to for bigger jobs in the vegetable or flower garden. It will help you quickly dig large enough holes for jumbo pack and quart size plants, or even 1-gallon plants in loamy soil.

The **transplanter** is narrower and has inches marked for planting bulbs, but it's also handy for working with already planted containers and smaller spaces to slip new plants in.



#### **Felco Pruners**

"The Right Tool for the Right Job" is a gardening truth. Trying to cut a branch that's too big for your tool can damage the tool and the branch, and the person pruning! That's why we carry tools that are engineered to make effective cuts. "I love my Felco pruners," says Jane, Manager of our Danville Camino Ramon location. "I have several pairs in different sizes; one I've had for almost 30 years. I use them for everything from pruning roses to deadheading, to pruning small branches on my Japanese maples. They last for years and replacement parts are available."



# ☐ Attract hummingbirds with plants that produce nectar: Agastache, Salvia, to kill larvae.

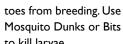
June Garden Checklist

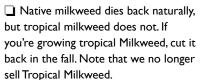
Penstemon, Buddleja, Fuchsia, and Abutilon. Hang hummingbird feeders on decks and patios.

☐ Plant organic herbs for use in the kitchen. Re-seed or plant greens, chard, and kale.

#### Prune/Maintain

- ☐ Don't forget to water houseplants as your attention focuses on the outdoors.
- ☐ Deadhead roses and flowers to encourage new blooms.
- ☐ Check early-bearing fruit trees for heavily laden branches. Thin fruits now to prevent branches from breaking. Thinning fruits also makes remaining fruit larger!
- ☐ Harvest vegetables to keep them producing.
- ☐ Check for water to keep mosqui-





#### Fertilize

- ☐ Boost blueberries and citrus with FST or Liquinox Iron and Zinc to maintain soil acidity.
- ☐ Feed roses with Sul-Po-Mag and alfalfa meal to encourage more blooms and vibrant color.
- ☐ Make sure succulents are protected from hot afternoon sun that can burn
- ☐ Your spring plantings are getting hungry. Feed them with E.B. Stone Organics fertilizers or Maxsea.

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

#### San Francisco

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

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

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

2895 Contra Costa Blvd. (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

# Open 7 days a week

8:30am to 6:30pm (or as indicated above)

#### 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

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We'll help you grow the plants you love!

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