

Gardener's Notebook

Volume 37, No. 1

News & Advice for Bay Area Gardeners

Spring 2024



Grow Your Best Garden Yet!

Our Spring & Summer Planting Timeline

Take the guesswork out of growing your own groceries with our Spring & Summer Bay Area planting chart. Then swing by Sloat Garden Center - each week our stores receive shipments of fresh, locally grown organic vegetable and herb plants, carefully selected for your neighborhood microclimate. Start growing now for a bountiful and organic garden!

Warm Weather Vegetables

Crop	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Basil	•	•	•	•
Beans	•	•	•	•
Corn	•	•	•	•
Cucumber	•	•	•	
Eggplant *	•	•	•	•
Melon *		•	•	
Peppers *		•	•	
Pumpkins		•	•	
Squash, summer	•	•	•	•
Squash, winter		•	•	
Tomatoes	•	•	•	
Watermelon *		•	•	

Will not thrive in cool areas *

Cool Weather Vegetables

Crop	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Beets	•	•	•	•
Broccoli	•			•
Brussels Sprouts		•	•	•
Cabbage	•			
Carrots	•			
Cauliflower	•			
Celery	•			•
Chard & Kale	•	•	•	•
Kohlrabi	•			•
Lettuce	•	•	•	•
Parsnips	•	•		
Peas	•			
Potatoes	•	•	•	
Radishes	•	•	•	•
Spinach	•			•



Delicious Food begins with Quality Soil

Garden soil should have a loamy consistency for optimal plant growth — loam is defined as light, rich, and well-aerated soil. This mixture can be achieved by adding amendments that



allow air and water to penetrate the root zone. We use Sloat Loam Builder as a soil amendment to create loam. Its blend of aged chicken manure, redwood bark, and compost improves soil fertility and provides a quick supply of essential nutrients for healthy and abundant plants.

Summertime **Tomatoes** start in April!

Craving homegrown tomatoes this year? Don't wait! Plant them now and kick off the tomato growing season. We're stocked with your favorite, locally grown heirloom, cherry, sauce, and slicer tomatoes that will thrive in Marin, San Francisco, and the East Bay. Each of our locations has the right varieties for your neighborhood's microclimate.

How to Grow Tomatoes

- Choose a spot that receives at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight each day.
- Mix in organic matter (Sloat Compost, Sloat Planting Mix, Sloat Loam Builder) if planting in soil beds. Use Sloat Organic **Potting Soil** for growing in containers. At planting time, mix in **E.B. Stone Organics** Sure Start so that nutrients are available at the plant's roots.
- Choose varieties based on your climate by visiting your neighborhood Sloat Garden Center.
- Give your plants plenty of space at least 2 ft. apart in the ground or 15 gallons of volume in a container. Always use a cage for support as plants grow.
- Feed growing plants during the season with E.B. Stone Organics Tomato & Vegetable Food. Water deeply.





"Now is the best time to plant tomatoes, and we have so many varieties. They're a garden focal point for this time of year. Also, carrots are fun to grow and a great project for kids!"

- Kylea at our Pleasant Hill store

Support your Veggies

As vegetables grow they need support. For larger plants like tomatoes, squash, peas, and cucumbers, we recommend our 54" heavy gauge wire cages or sturdy inverted step cages. Our 33" cages are perfect for supporting smaller plants laden with peppers, eggplants, and beans. All Sloat Garden Center cages are made in the U.S. with American steel.





Click to view our 65+ Food GrowingGuides



Our Top Picks: These California Native Plants are Loved by Pollinators

There are so many beautiful California native plant species that will thrive in your garden while also supporting local pollinators. Our favorites provide food and shelter for birds, bees, and butterflies. We also appreciate our native grasses like Muhlenbergia and Fescue that can add texture to the landscape. Generate a list of native plants for your growing conditions and zip code with Calscape.org's database.



Picturesque Arctostaphylos (Manzanita) can thrive planted almost anywhere. Manzanita tolerates rocky, sandy, acidic, or heavy soils. Early spring brings urn shaped white-pink flowers, followed by berry-like red or brown fruit that attract birds.



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



Salvia clevelandii — With wonderfully fragrant foliage and flowers, this native Salvia produces whorls of blue flowers all summer. Excellent for hot, dry areas.



Eriogonum (Buckwheat) is a perennial subshrub that's sun-loving, pest and disease-resistant, drought-tolerant, easy to care for, and wind-tolerant. The fluffy pink or white dense clustered puffballs attract native bees and butterflies.



Loved for its textured foliage and stunning purple-blue flowers, 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. Birds relish their small seeds!



Achillea millefolium (Yarrow) — Deer resistant and a frequent component of butterfly gardens. Plant in full sun near the coast, or part shade if you're inland.

Prime your soil with Wakefield Biochar Soil Conditioner



Biochar Soil Conditioner offers long-lasting benefits to your garden's soil by preventing nutrient leaching. That in turn provides a stable food supply for plants and beneficial soil microorganisms.

Created from wood heated at high temperatures, Biochar absorbs water and nutrients when applied to soil. Soil microbes are attracted to these reserves, which fosters plant growth and improves soil health.

Biochar should be mixed into the soil. Combine it with Sloat Compost or Sloat Loam Builder. A one cubic ft bag can amend 100 sq ft of soil to a depth of 4 to 6 inches.



Celebrating Three Decades Growing with Soquel Nursery

Situated on 14 acres just outside Santa Cruz, Soquel Nursery Growers is one of our go-to local growers that specializes in California natives, perennials, shrubs, grasses, vines, and succulents. In recent years Soquel has expanded its California native propagation efforts. Under the guidance of General Manager Curtis Ferris, the nursery now grows hundreds of varieties.

"We're growing more and more natives. We've always grown plants we think are ecologically responsible, plants that provide nectar, forage or habitats," explains Curtis. "With California natives there's an aspect that's personal to me... that the plants you put in your yard are telling a story. What many people see in a garden might be the extent of what they understand about nature. Having that representation of wild spaces will hopefully inspire people to protect them."

Curtis' work helps support native pollinators; Soquel was one of the original growers that ceased using Neonicotinoids (an insecticide that impairs pollinators) well before it became news.

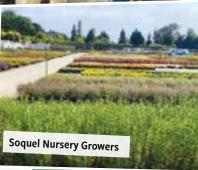
Curtis and Soquel Nursery are innovative growers," explains Sloat's horticulturist Katy Thompson. "They're ecologically and community minded. Curtis is fair, his plants are quality, and he has a great heart."

Our collaboration with Soquel Nursery began three decades ago; a partnership where both Sloat and Soquel Nursery evolved as family-owned businesses deeply rooted in community and ecological values.

"We've been working with Sloat Garden Center for over 30 years. We've always had an amazing relationship," says Curtis. "There's a degree of creativity that you only find when you have customers like Sloat that are supportive of growers like us. It's been very successful. It's good stuff."

Find Soquel Nursery plants in our stores this spring and meet Soquel Growers at our June in-store Q&A's. When you support Sloat Garden Center you support local growers!







We design California Native gardens.

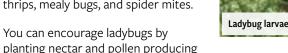
When designing gardens, we encourage the incorporation of native plants whenever possible. "There are so many beautiful native substitutes for grass, hedging, and perennial color," says Design Dept. Manager Jen Strobel. "These plants help welcome native pollinators and wildlife."



Ladybugs are Your Garden's Natural Pest Control Solution

Ladybugs serve as valued allies in a thriving garden ecosystem by preying on harmful pest insects. In its lifetime, one ladybug can consume over 5,000 aphids!

Both larvae and adult ladybugs contribute to pest management. They also feast on slow-moving, soft-bodied, insects such as scale, thrips, mealy bugs, and spider mites.





flowers like Achillea, Daisies, clover, and Alyssum in your containers and garden beds. These flowers provide a vital food source for ladybugs, encouraging them to establish and thrive in your garden environment.

Sloat only stocks native California ladybugs (Hippodamia convergens). Visit our stores during March and April and introduce these natural pest control agents into your garden.

How to release ladybugs: Release ladybugs at the base of freshly watered plants in the early morning, evening, or on a cloudy day when temperatures are cooler. Avoid the middle of the day when temperatures are high.

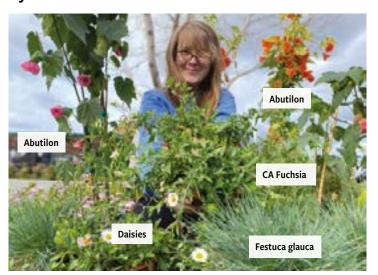
6 SLOAT NOTEBOOK Spring 2024 Azaleas: A blooming rainbow for part-shade spaces Azaleas are a popular landscape or container choice for their versatility; they offer both vibrant color and structural appeal. These stunning spring blooming shrubs work as hedges, foundation plants, and container specimens. We've stocked Azaleas this spring in multiple colors and sizes – our collection ensures there's an Azalea to complement every space. Azaleas need: Soil: good draining soil full of organic matter like E.B Stone Azalea, Camellia & Acid Mix Soil. Light: Like all plants, Azaleas appreciate being planted in the right location, which for them means dappled sunlight and/or morning sun. Water: Irrigation in the dry season. Fertilizer: E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food



Our stores are bursting with pottery in a rainbow of styles and sizes

Our Staff Recommends: 8 Must-Have Plants for Spring

Kylea's Picks from our Pleasant Hill location



Abutilon — Use this flowering beauty as a statement plant in a container or the ground. "They bloom consistently over the course of the year (insted of just a season) which makes them an excellent choice for vibrant, bright, long-lasting color," explains Kylea.

Festuca glauca — Commonly known as Blue Fescue. This fun blue colored grass makes a statement, drawing attention and infusing landscapes with visual interest! Use it to add drama to borders or containers. It's also waterwise.

Santa Barbara Daisies — These delightful flowering plants are cherished for their abundant blooms and versatile landscaping applications. With their profusion of prolific little daisy-like flowers, they create a charming carpet of color when used as ground covers in garden beds, borders, or along pathways.

California Fuchsia — This native plant is stunning! It's just about the only California native plant in our area that flowers in May, June, and into the height of summer. Love the bright red blooms!

Taylor's Picks from our SF, Sloat Blvd. location



Coleonema pulchrum is a delightfully soft shrub that's perfect for sunny locations. Their small pink flowers twinkle across the foliage in spring and summer. "I always recommend this plant for those who would like something to sway in the wind," says Taylor.

Ceanothus 'Dark Star' (California Lilac) — is a wonderful addition to the garden. These California natives are loved by our local pollinators. "My favorite is 'Dark Star' which has small glossy leaves, upright growth, and deep blue flowers," he says.

Lomandra longifolia — A robust grass-like perennial that has striking green or variegated foliage. An easy fit for mass landscape planting or to softly accent a focal point. "I appreciate that they're waterwise, evergreen, and look full year-round," says Taylor.

Sarcococca ruscifolia — Grown out or trimmed back, this plant has simple green leaves that thrive in shade. It lives up to its common name "Sweet Box" in late winter with clusters of aromatic white flowers that can fill any space with the smell of sweet honey.

April Garden Checklist and other beneficial insects to help con-Prune/Maintain ☐ Grow your own organic groceries trol aphids, mites, whiteflies, and other ☐ Prevent powdery mildew and rust this summer. Now is the time to plant garden pests. If you release beneficial on roses and other plants with Bonide tomatoes, herbs, zucchini, and berries. insects, don't spray for garden pests. Neem Oil. Already have a powdery Use a soaker hose and mulch to conmildew problem? Treat it with Monteserve water in your vegetable garden. rey Complete Disease Control. ☐ Replenish your stock of fertilizers ☐ Start planning your summer flower ☐ Stop aphids with Bonide Neem Oil. from E.B. Stone (they're locally made garden and bouquets. Great summer ☐ Snails and slugs are hatching in your for the Bay Area). The "Naturals" and annuals for the Bay Area are: Lobelia, garden right now. Use non-toxic Sluggo "Organics" lines are pet and environ-Begonia, Impatiens, Marigolds, Cosmos, or Sluggo Plus to control them. mentally safe choices to help each spe-Petunias, Snapdragon, and Alyssum. ☐ Release ladybugs, praying mantis, cific plant group in your garden thrive. Perennials: Penstemon, Salvia, Dahlia, and Argyranthemum.

Let it Hang or Climb with Versatile Houseplants



jungle-like atmosphere.

requires additional support.



Hanging plants like Pothos have surged in popularity over the last year. We appreciate them for their versatility as hangers or climbers, instantly infusing indoor spaces with a

bark to reach sunlight in the forest canopy. To recreate this natural environment indoors,

sphagnum moss poles mimic the trees' bark, providing a structure for them to climb and

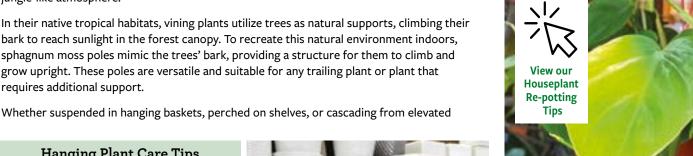
grow upright. These poles are versatile and suitable for any trailing plant or plant that

Whether suspended in hanging baskets, perched on shelves, or cascading from elevated













Soil: Plant in Sloat Indoor Potting Soil

Hanging Plant Care Tips

Light: All our vining plant picks will thrive in moderate to bright, indirect light.

Feed: Espoma Indoor Plant Food





Design your Dream Garden

We have on-site and virtual garden design appointments available for residents of Marin, San Francisco, and Contra Costa counties.

Our Dynamic Design consultations offer an efficient path to start your garden plans. Beginning with an initial on-site consultation followed by a visit to our stores to select plants, our designers will work closely with you to create a personalized design that fits your

preferences and budget. From coordinating ordering and delivery, to placing the chosen plants in your garden, our professional staff will oversee every step of the process. Short on time? Provide us with a budget and we'll take care of selecting the perfect plants for your dream garden.

To schedule an appointment, fill out our consultation form by scanning the QR code at right, or email design@sloatgardens.com







May Garden Checklist

- ☐ Plant annuals: Petunias, Marigolds, Begonias, Lobelia, Salvia & Zinnia. Replace spent annuals with 4-inch perennials: Calibrachoa, Coleus, Bacopa, and Ipomoea.
- ☐ Keep your harvest bounty going: Re-seed radishes, carrots, beets, and leafy greens.
- ☐ Plant late summer organic edibles like pumpkins, squash, sunflowers, peppers, basil, and melons. Plant Brussels sprouts for fall harvest.
- ☐ Select garden-ready Dahlias, perennials, Hydrangeas & hanging baskets.
- ☐ Plant a sensory garden with Star Jasmine, Gardenia, and Lavender. You can grow a fragrant garden in sun or shade, ask our staff for help with plant selections.

Prune/Maintain

- ☐ Don't forget Mom on Mother's Day! We have blooming flowers, gift cards, and hanging baskets. Check out our selection of specialty hand tools, gloves, and protective hats.
- ☐ Check hose fittings for spent washers and leaks. Ensure your hose has a shut-off valve or other water-conserving feature. Consider a soaker hose to conserve water in the vegetable garden.
- ☐ May is the recommended month for managing soil grubs. Use beneficial nematodes to keep them in check.

- ☐ Your indoor plants want food. Feed them this month with Maxsea Acid Formula or Tappin' Roots All Stages.
- ☐ Fertilize Rhododendrons, Azaleas, and Camellias with E.B.
- Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food. ☐ Boost vegetables with E.B. Stone Organics Tomato & Vegetable Food.



April In Store Q&A: Veggies

May In Store Q&A: Feeding plants

June In Store Q&A: CA natives

July In Store Q&A: Pollinator

friendly plants with Blooms

with Sweetwaters Growers

Spring In Store Q&A with Local Growers

A Legacy of Exceptional Pottery at Sloat Garden Center

Spring 2024

Sloat Garden Center is the largest independent pottery importer in the U.S., linking talented pottery makers worldwide with independent garden centers across North America.

Sloat owner Dave Straus has forged pottery relationships over five decades, traveling to international pottery factories. Through selection and design, Dave built strong connections with pottery makers who remain key suppliers to our stores today.

"I started importing Bonsai pottery from Japan in 1969, and in the mid-70s I went to Taiwan and purchased hand-painted ceramics," says Dave. "Then I started going to Korea to source small indoor pottery, terracotta, and large outdoor pots that were used to make kimchi. Back

> then almost every family made their own kimchi (usually on their roofs!) so there were many manufacturers of these "kimchi jars" in Korea. Sloat Garden Center imported and sold them as planters."

Years later, Dave's son (and Sloat Co-President) Zack now takes the lead as the second pottery generation at Sloat Garden Center. Zack sources all the pottery and still works with the same artisans.

"One of my favorite aspects of sourcing pottery is cultivating the relationships we've built with these international family businesses over the years. We feel like we've grown together," explains Zack. "Putting a face to the pottery makes things so much more personal. It's not just an email address; our vendors are also our friends."

As Dave steps back, Zack reflects on moving Sloat Garden Center's pottery choices forward and working with his dad.

"I can bounce ideas off of him but also take things in my own direction. On a more personal level, the business relationship continues to strengthen our father and son bond. I am so lucky to have him not only as a mentor in the business world, but also as a father."



Dave and Zack together with terracotta

April - August Free Gardening Events

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.

Webinar: Tomato Growing Basics Sat., April 6th, 10am

> Webinar: Landscaping with Edible Plants Sat., April 27th, 10am

Webinar: Backyard Birding, Golden Gate Audubon Society Sun., May 4th, 10am

Webinar: Friends of the Urban Forest: Right Tree Right Place Wed., May 8th, 5pm

Webinar: Growing Melons, Cucumbers, Squash, Pumpkins Sat., May 18th, 10am

Webinar: Companion Planting Sat., June 15th, 10am

In Store Pot-Up Bar: **Summer Color Pots** Sat. and Sun. (7/27 & 7/28), 1-3

In Store Pot-Up Bar: Succulent Containers Sat. and Sun. (8/3 & 8/4), 1-3 Sat. and Sun. (8/17 & 8/18), 1-3

Nursery

with Greengro

with Soquel Growers

Tap into the benefits of Neem with NeemMax

This organic, earth-friendly botanical solution is designed to tackle a range of pests and diseases. From grubs and weevils to soil pests and mites, NeemMax targets both pest larvae and adults while protecting against fungal attacks like powdery mildew. As a convenient 4-in-1 product (Fungicide, Insecticide, Miticide, and Nematicide),

NeemMax contains bioactive compounds that disrupt the pest insect lifecycle. Whether applied as a spray or as a drench, NeemMax offers safe, natural grub control in lawns and management of soil pest insects like root aphids and root mealy bugs. Beneficial nematodes and earthworms are not affected.



Click for full

Events Info



Revitalize Your Garden with **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus**

Improve your soil by first amending it with Sloat Forest Mulch Plus. This dynamic medium promotes plant growth by enriching it with organic matter, which in turn fosters nutrient retention, drainage, and aeration. As a waterwise aid, it conserves moisture, regulates root temperature and inhibits weed growth. 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.

Locally Grown Rieger Begonias

Rieger Begonia production has a rich history in California, long grown in greenhouses up and down the coast. McCahon's Nursery is one of the last of many nurseries that have propagated these charming plants since the 1970's.



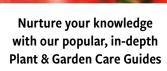
We love Rieger Begonias' warm hues and hardy resilience in vibrant shades of yellow, red, orange, white, and pink. Come grab a few of these beauties!

Rieger Begonia Care Tips:

Sun: Choose a bright spot with indirect sunlight to prevent leaf damage.

Water: Maintain consistent soil moisture, ensure proper drainage in your pots.

Soil: Sloat Organic Potting **Soil** is perfect for the job!



Birds, Bees & Butterflies Bromeliads & Orchids Gardening 101 Grow your Own Food Houseplants Pest Remedies Shrubs, Roses & Trees

Click to view the Care **Guides**





Join our FREE Gardener's **Reward Program**

- Earn points toward "dollars off" coupons
- Subscription to this Gardener's Notebook newsletter. filled with the best local seasonal gardening advice
- Automatic sign-up bonus of 200 Gardener's Rewards points
- Invitations to our expert gardening webinars and other awesome perks!

June Garden Checklist

- ☐ Attract hummingbirds with plants that produce nectar: Agastache, Salvia, 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 grow larger!

☐ Boost blueberries and citrus with FST or Liquinox Iron and Zinc to maintain soil acidity.

☐ Check for standing water to keep mosquitoes from breed-

☐ Native milkweed dies back naturally, but tropical milkweed

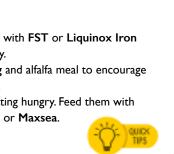
does not. If you're growing tropical Milkweed, cut it back in

the fall. Note that we no longer sell Tropical Milkweed.

- ☐ Feed roses with Sul-Po-Mag and alfalfa meal to encourage more blooms and vibrant color.
- ☐ Your spring plantings are getting hungry. Feed them with
- E.B. Stone Organics fertilizers or Maxsea.

☐ Harvest vegetables to keep them producing.

ing. Use Mosquito Dunks or Bits to kill larvae.





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

design@sloatgardens.com (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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Visit us on the web: sloatgardens.com



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We'll help you grow the plants you love!

12 SLOAT NOTEBOOK Spring 2024

We're in the Neighborhood! 12 Unique Sloat Garden Center Locations to Discover this Spring

Our family-owned garden centers are as individual as the neighborhoods where they're located. While we stock similar plants and pottery at each store, not all inventories are the same. Curious if we have your favorite plant or product in stock? Give our stores a call or drop by!

