



# Gardener's Notebook

Volume 32, No. 1

News & Advice for Bay Area Gardeners

Early Spring 2018

grow your own  
food this  
*spring*

The pleasure of eating fruits, herbs, and vegetables harvested yourself, from your very own Bay Area garden, is absolutely divine. Go ahead and dream of backyard strawberries, tomatoes grown in containers or windowsill-ripened herbs sprinkled onto the evening salad – because late March and April are the perfect months to plant an edible garden, whether in containers, garden beds or in sunny kitchens.



*"Even in very small spaces, you can grow your own herbs and food."*

- Charlie Nardozzi, Horticulturist & Garden Writer

**In this issue:** Grow your own local food • tomato time • succulents • indoor plants • pottery

## 6 steps to growing successful tomatoes organically

- Once warm weather is more consistent, start your tomato growing endeavors by choosing varieties that work best in your particular micro-climate (see our handy list at right). If you garden in San Francisco or foggy pockets, you'll need a cool climate tomato variety to succeed. Sloat Garden Center offers a wide selection of locally-grown, certified organic tomato and vegetable starts.
- Tomatoes can be grown in barrels or tubs planted in **Sloat Organic Potting Soil**. Further enrich soil with **Down to Earth Bio-Live** to encourage expansive root systems, increased crop yields, and delicious fruits, herbs, and vegetables.
- When growing tomatoes in the ground, use soil that's high in organic matter. If your soil is heavy or sandy, dig in **Sloat Loam Builder** or **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus**. Use **Down to Earth Bio-Live** to start plants.
- At planting time: Plant deeply so that the first set of leaves is just above the soil level. Roots will form on the buried stem, creating a larger and stronger root system. Then, stake or cage tomatoes and guide new growth to maximize production and prevent fruit damage.
- Tomatoes need full sun (8 hours plus) and do best with infrequent but deep watering. Younger plants will require more water as they develop their root systems.
- As your tomatoes grow, feed them with nutrient rich **Down to Earth Bio-Fish** fertilizer to promote vigorous growth and plentiful fruit.

**April is Tomato Time**  
*This is the best month to plant tomatoes!*



### Cool Climate tomato varieties

Celebrity  
Cherokee Purple  
Green Zebra  
Sungold  
Siletz  
Black Krim  
Oregon Spring  
Sweet 100  
Big Beef  
San Francisco Fog  
Stupice  
Early Girl

*Note: Availability varies with the season*

### Heat Tolerant tomato varieties

Brandywine  
Early Girl  
Celebrity  
Sweet 100  
Roma  
San Marzano  
Pineapple  
Beefsteak  
Isis Candy  
Abe Lincoln  
Berkeley Tie Dye  
Ace  
Sungold  
Black Krim

### Seminar: Tomatoes 101

Join us for an introductory tomato growing discussion! Our Bay Area tomato experts will share easy-to-implement planting tips, favorite tomato varieties, and tomato planting combinations. We'll also troubleshoot solutions for common tomato challenges.

*See page 7 for details!*

### Meet our family of local producers & growers

**Flatland Flower Farm** is a very small organic farm and nursery located in the hills west of Sebastopol.



Owners Dan and Joanne started the business in their backyard, and that continues today... except with a bigger backyard! They find and grow the most unique old and new world heirloom and new trend organic vegetables, herbs, and flowers.

## Solutions: Correcting Blossom End Rot

If Blossom End Rot sounds icky, it's because it is. But it's also preventable! Blossom End Rot affects tomatoes, peppers, and melons when there's a calcium deficiency in the soil. Immature fruit develops small, light brown spots at the blossom end, which expands as the fruit ripens. The condition can be aggravated by high salt content, or low soil moisture, and is more common in sandier soils, so be sure yours contains a good amount of loam or compost. We treat Blossom End Rot with the below calcium rich amendments.

### MAXI-CAL Calcium Deficiency Corrector

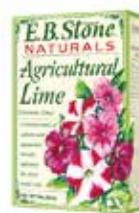
This bio-effective formulation corrects Blossom End Rot in tomatoes, peppers, and melons.



**Agricultural Lime** is a natural, vegan source of calcium and magnesium. Incorporate Agricultural Lime into soil to ensure a good supply of calcium which will help prevent blossom end rot. Agricultural lime also increases pH levels of acidic soils.



Blossom End Rot photo  
care of UC Davis



### Pest Solutions

Grow healthy tomatoes by keeping bad bugs away. We carry individual Green Earth blue/yellow sticky traps to help. You can control and monitor aphids, thrips and whitefly organically and reduce the possibility of infestation in your vegetable garden.



## Charlie's Chalkboard:

How to grow more tasty food!

Charlie has been at the Pleasant Hill location since 1986 and loves offering gardening advice!

Let's talk about soil! Soil is either considered acid (low pH) or alkaline (high pH), or somewhere in between. These are known as pH levels.

Native San Francisco Bay Area soils tend to be on the alkaline side, and some plants do thrive in this condition; vines like Clematis, or bulbs such as Iris, Crocus and Lilies.

In our experience, most fruit, herbs, and vegetables grow best in slightly acidic (or neutral) soil levels between 6.5 & 7. Growing at this pH level results in higher yields.

Gardeners can naturally encourage a low pH level by rotating where crops are planted. Crop rotation discourages plant diseases, which in turn makes a higher percentage of beneficial microbes available to plants.

But – there's a caveat. Crop rotation can be difficult for most backyard gardeners contending with small spaces. Charlie at the Pleasant Hill store highly recommends adding pH adjusters like F.S.T. or organic Espoma Soil Acidifier before planting to manually adjust pH levels. This helps acidify soil and keep leaves green.

Multiple pH applications each year are suggested for acid loving plants like citrus, blueberries, avocado, Rhododendrons, Camellias, azaleas, Japanese maples and Gardenias (their leaves tend to get yellow when they need more acidic soil.) F.S.T. and Soil Acidifier can also be used as a top dressing around these trees and shrubs.

Curious if your soil is on the acidic or alkaline side? Use a digital Soil pH meter. We carry digital meters that provide instant soil pH readings, which is oh so helpful when growing vegetables, flowers, and fruit.



## 4 secrets to growing food in small spaces

### SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

When you think of growing food, do you envision a large garden bed with 10-20 different vegetables? We're here to say that growing food needn't be a large affair. You need much less room than you think for an edible harvest. Start small and go big with time!



### HEALTHY GARDENS BEGIN WITH HEALTHY SOIL

Before planting, build up the soil with organic matter and soil amendments. Plant health starts with soil health. All edible crops will appreciate a loose, loamy mix. *Loam = a fertile soil mixture of clay, silt, and sand.*



### USE THE SPACE YOU HAVE

Consider plants that can grow vertically. Trailing crops like cherry tomatoes, and vining vegetables like peas, cucumbers and melons love climbing up trellises, fences, and poles.



### KEEP PLANTING!

Get in the habit of succession plantings. When one round of lettuce gets harvested, plant another. You'll end up with loads of fresh-from-the-garden food to harvest each week.



### The best months to plant cool weather vegetables

**Cool weather vegetables** are most successful if matured when temps are mild and cool. If temperatures are very warm or hot, they'll become bitter and possibly "bolt" (go to seed) rather than produce edible parts. Plant in early spring to harvest before the summer heat. Plant a second crop in late summer.

	March	April	May	June
beets	●	●	●	●
broccoli	●	●		
Brussels sprouts			●	●
cabbage	●	●		
carrots	●	●	●	●
cauliflower	●	●	●	●
celery	●	●	●	●
chard	●	●	●	●
kohlrabi	●	●		
lettuce	●	●	●	●
onions		●		
parsnips	●		●	
peas	●	●		
potatoes	●	●	●	●
radishes	●	●	●	●
rutabaga	●			
spinach	●	●		
turnips	●			

### The best months to plant warm weather vegetables

**Warm weather vegetables** want both warm soil and very warm temperatures. These plants are killed by frost and must be planted after the last frost date in your area. We use St. Patrick's Day, March 17th, as a "safe" date. If planted any earlier, you may need some protection from late season frost.

	March	April	May	June
beans		●	●	●
corn		●	●	●
cucumber		●	●	●
melon*			●	●
peppers*			●	●
pumpkins			●	●
squash, summer		●	●	●
squash, winter			●	●
tomatoes	●	●	●	●
watermelon*			●	●

\*Successful only in the warmest areas

Plant herb and vegetable beds with **Sloat Organic Loam Builder**. It contains a unique blend of aged redwood, compost and chicken manure. This loamy blend enhances the bacterial action in soil and improves soil fertility for vegetables and flowers. Mix 50/50 with native or raised bed soil.



## Bring the green inside: Indoor plants provide dependable color all year

Four to six days. That's how long the average cut flower bouquet lasts. But indoor plants will be around for much longer – they offer dependable vibrancy that thrive throughout the year. You can bring the color indoors with plants like Anthurium, orchids, bromeliads, and African violets, and pair them with our new bold Lotus pottery. Added indoor plant benefit: they're not only beautiful, they also clean the air. Check out our air cleaning plant list, and then stop in to Sloat Garden Center for our beautiful indoor plants.

### Clean the Air with Indoor Plants

*Indoor plants can effectively reduce the amount of mold, airborne microbes, and compounds (called Volatile Organic Chemicals or VOC's), in the air of our homes and offices. VOC's are commonly found in paint, glue, building materials, fuels, and cleaning chemicals. Several studies have shown that when certain plants are present in an enclosed space, the levels of VOC's fell steadily. What follows is a list of plants that are effective air cleaners, including some that have been dubbed "super cleaners."*

Chinese Evergreen (*Aglaonema*) – especially effective on benzene

Asparagus Fern – a super cleaner, it removes toluene, octane, terpene, and trichlorethylene

Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum*) – effective on formaldehyde

Dracaena 'Janet Craig' – effective on benzene, trichlorethylene, and formaldehyde

Corn plant (*Dracaena massangeana*) – effective on formaldehyde

Pothos (*Epipremnum*) – effective on formaldehyde

Rubber Tree (*Ficus elastica*) – effective on formaldehyde

Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis*) – the best for effectiveness on formaldehyde

Tree Philodendron (*Philodendron selloum*) – especially effective on formaldehyde

Heart-leaf Philodendron (*P. cordatum*) – effective on formaldehyde

Pygmy Date Palm (*Phoenix roebelenii*) – effective on formaldehyde, xylene, toluene

Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum*) – effective on acetone, benzene, formaldehyde

Lady Palm (*Rhapis excelsa*) – especially effective on ammonia

Arrowhead Plant (*Syngonium*) – effective on formaldehyde

Purple Heart (*Tradescantia*) – a super cleaner

Snake Plant/Mother-in-Law's Tongue (*Sansevieria*) – effective on benzene, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, xylene

Aloe spp. – effective on formaldehyde



**Colorful indoor plant bouquet**

Indoor plants add zest to our living and work spaces.

At back: Anthurium, orchid and bromeliad. Front: African violet and striped bromeliad in our new line of Lotus pottery available in various colors and sizes (2" – 8" pots).



**San Francisco's indoor plant oasis**

Golden Gate Park's Victorian-era glass greenhouse Conservatory of Flowers has captivated visitors for more than a century. This gem of Victorian architecture has a long and storied history. It's the oldest public wood-and-glass conservatory in North America. As a city, state and national historic landmark, the Conservatory remains one of the most photographed and beloved institutions in San Francisco. Stop by and take a look inside; the building contains more than 2,000 species of plants and flowers from around the globe (see chocolate, vanilla, and other beloved spices as living plants).



### Sloat note...

#### Our ladybugs are California Natives

We carry only native Californian ladybugs (*Hippodamia convergens*). These beneficial insects are not invasive – they're from California and we like it that way! They overwinter in large aggregations in the Sierra Nevada. In the spring, adults fly down from the mountains to coastal and valley areas.

Also known as ladybird beetles, the most common ladybug is red with black spots, but watch for other species in a variety of colors, with or without spots. Gardeners should beware of one ladybug look-alike: the spotted cucumber beetle! This green beetle with black spots feeds on crops and foliage and is certainly not beneficial.



**California ladybugs on board!**

While they're best known for eating aphids, both larvae and adult ladybugs gorge on slow moving, soft-bodied invasive insects like scale, thrips, mealybugs, and spider mites.

In its lifetime, one ladybug may eat over 5,000 aphids - they also consume pollen and nectar from flowers like yarrow, clover and tansy. You can encourage ladybugs by planting nectar producing flowers in your containers and garden beds.



**CONSERVATORY OF FLOWERS**  
GOLDEN GATE PARK • SAN FRANCISCO



*"Color and texture are the big wows of succulents. One succulent alone is pretty, but it's the ten succulents together in a beautiful arrangement that makes them stunning. Mix colors, textures, shapes and sizes. Be fearless!"*

- Megan Rodkin of Succulent Gardens

### Creative ideas for succulent cuttings

You can create a succulent "bouquet" using cuttings from succulent plants. Take 5 or more plant cuttings and arrange them closely together in a container.



Any receptacle can work for this purpose. Bonsai pots are especially nifty, but so are cool spice jars, cigar boxes, mint tins, and antique coffee cups. Add top dressing to the arrangement: use mosses, driftwood, found objects, stones, and sea glass to cover the soil.

*Care recommendations:* Water when dry. Keep the succulents pinched. When plants outgrow the bouquet, pinch them back, allow to root and then add back in to the arrangement. Or use the cuttings to create a new bouquet.

### Meet our family of local producers & growers

Succulent Gardens is a Castroville-based plant nursery that grows over 400 succulent varieties. Their mix always rotates, but ranges from 2" plants to large specimens. The nursery covers over three acres outside and in greenhouses.



The company started in Carmel in the 1970's as a retail store, but grew to a full scale nursery. In 2014, original owner Robin Stockwell sold the nursery to the Rodkin family, and they continue to serve succulent fanatics throughout the Bay Area. Visitors are welcome to stop by and check out the nursery and the stunning, decades-old succulent beds. It's a special place next to the Monterey Bay!

### How to care for succulents

Alert: Succulents do not thrive on neglect. While they're more tolerant of neglectful conditions than most plants (which is a survival skill needed for the extreme geographies where many originate), succulents actually like a little TLC. They will repay you ten-fold if you pay attention to a few basic points.

Most succulent varieties need a daily dose of 4-6 hours of dappled sunlight. Allow your plant's soil to approach dryness before watering. When you water, do it thoroughly so that water drains out the bottom of the pot. In general water succulents once a week, but during warm seasons and in growth periods, it may be twice a week. Cactus and succulents appreciate calcium and other micro-nutrients. We recommend **Grow More Cactus Juice** (1-7-6) used every 2 weeks late spring through summer.



### Plant delicious citrus trees this spring

**This just in!** Our stores have received a large stock of vigorous lemon and lime trees grown in SoCal and shipped directly to us. Plant 'em now!

**Bearss lime:** This juicy, acidic, seedless fruit has a true lime flavor. The smooth rind turns pale-yellow when the fruit ripens. Hardy!



**Mexican lime:** The standard lime used in beverages and Key lime pie. This small, rounded, yellow-green fruit has aromatic, acidic flesh.

**Meyer lemon:** This lemon is a home gardener favorite! The large, round fruit have a thin, yellow-orange rind. Flesh is sweeter and less acidic than that of a true lemon. Excellent for use in cooking. Cold hardy and makes a great espalier, hedge or container plant.



**Fertilizer Recommendation**  
Nourish your citrus trees and reap the rewards of fresh fruit. Down To Earth Citrus Mix 6-3-3 is specially formulated with nutrients that promote lush new growth, abundant green foliage, bountiful blossoms and fruit.



## POLYWOOD



Vineyard style



Nautical style



Modern style

## Durable, colorful, Adirondack furniture for outdoors



Introducing POLYWOOD® Furniture -- durable and weather resistant Adirondack chairs, rocking chairs, and side tables.

This thoughtfully designed, low-maintenance furniture is manufactured from recycled milk jugs and a solution to the growing mountains of plastics in our landfills.

The furniture is backed by a 20-year warranty and built to withstand a range of conditions including hot sun, salt spray, and freezing cold.

It's also resistant to stains and corrosive substances, and isn't prone to splinter, crack, chip, peel, or rot. POLYWOOD Furniture cleans easily with soap and water and requires no painting, staining, or waterproofing.

Stop in this spring and test out these new chairs featuring Vintage Finish colors: Coffee, Sahara, Aruba, White, and Lime.

*This furniture is available at our Sloat Blvd., Kentfield, Novato, Pleasant Hill, Danville (Camino Ramon) and Concord stores.*

## Introducing the Sloat Kids Club

New for 2018: Announcing our Kids Club! This new program helps children connect to the garden through monthly classes and workshops. Kids will have fun learning about plants, bugs, birds, and worms through creative projects they can take home with them. There's no need to sign up...just ask for a Kids Club card at any one of our locations. Our Kids Club is free and geared to children ages 5 to 12. Note: Kids workshops have an additional fee.

## KIDS CLUB BENEFITS:

- Kids get a stamp on their Club Card every time they visit our stores.
- Collect 5 stamps and receive a FREE 4" annual plant or vegetable.
- Kids receive free admission to our monthly kids classes.
- It's fun to discover the magic of plants!



**Did you know:** Sloat Garden Center supports local Bay Area schools through our Growing up Green program. Visit [sloatgardens.com](http://sloatgardens.com) for details.

## One Pot Wonder: a no muss no fuss elegant idea

Looking to cut down on garden work this spring and summer, but still have a knock out display? One Pot Wonders are refined shrubs that are ideally scaled to impress when planted alone. While we love creating containers filled with a mix of plants, putting one power plant in a large pot is satisfying. These plants require minimal care beyond watering and feeding to keep them looking great. Topping the soil with a mulch finishes the look and helps to reduce water loss. Easy choices for decks and entryways: Jacaranda Bonsai Blue, Boxwood cones and globes, Cordyline 'Burgundy Spire', Podocarpus Icée Blue, Star Jasmine, Wheeler's Dwarf Mock Orange, and Cousin Itt 'Little River Wattle'.



Boxwood 'Green Mountain'



Cordyline 'Burgundy Spire'



Jacaranda 'Bonsai Blue'

A very versatile (and vertical) hanging garden

*New this spring!*

The Yard Tree is a vertical gardening stand that solves the dilemma of where to put plants. Designed for patios, decks or indoor spaces, you can personalize the hanging garden with a system of infinitely adjustable gravity-lock hooks and rings. Position baskets, planters, bird feeders, and wind chimes at any height or orientation.



Ester's Yard Tree in San Francisco

Sloat Garden Center team member Ester created the above hanging garden for her apartment. "I live near the ocean and I love how sturdy it is," she says. Ester's Yard Tree is filled with hanging flowers, a hummingbird feeder and accent pieces. Later this spring she'll plant cherry tomatoes and peppers for small space edible gardening. Next winter she may create a poinsettia tree or a holiday ornament tree.



## Imperial White Pottery

We love these crisp, white pots for just about any spring flower and foliage combination. Gorgeous indoors or out! Visit Sloat Garden Center to see our full line of unique pottery.



## Container Watering Tip

Container gardeners: leave enough space at the top of your planter to create a reservoir for water. This helps thoroughly water the plant!

## Love Plants?

Sloat Garden Center is hiring at all locations. Work in the fresh air with teammates who are passionate about plants!

## SPRING gardening seminars

Reward Members attend Seminars for free (\$10 for non-members) and pay a reduced fee for Workshops. Receive a 10% single-use coupon for attending. Attendance is limited so please call the specified location to reserve your seat.

### SEMINAR: Success with Soil & Fertilizer

Curious what's in that fertilizer bag or box? What do those 3 numbers mean? This seminar is a great way to learn how to amend your soil, how to fertilize, when to fertilize, and why to fertilize. Local company E.B. Stone has decades of gardening knowledge to share and will join us to discuss these topics.

Wednesday, March 21, Sloat Blvd., noon

Saturday, March 24, Pleasant Hill, 10am

Saturday, March 24, Novato, 10am

Saturday, March 24, Danville, Diablo Rd., 10am

Saturday, March 31, Concord, 10am

### SEMINAR: Tomatoes 101

Join us for an introductory tomato growing discussion as part of our Tomato Time seminar series. Our Bay Area tomato experts will share easy-to-implement planting tips, favorite tomato varieties, and tomato planting combinations. We'll also troubleshoot solutions for common tomato challenges.

Saturday, April 7, Concord, 10am (Dustin Strobel)

Saturday, April 7, Pleasant Hill, 10am (Ryan Daugherty)

Sunday, April 8, Miller Ave., 10am (Dan Alexander)

Sunday, April 8, Novato, noon (Jen Strobel)

Wednesday, April 11, Kentfield, noon (Jen Strobel)

Wednesday, April 11, Danville Diablo, noon (Brad Sheehan)

Wednesday, April 18, Sloat Blvd., noon (Jen Strobel)

*Visit [www.sloatgardens.com](http://www.sloatgardens.com) for a full list of spring seminar & workshop descriptions*

## 60 years of Bay Area gardening with Sloat Garden Center

### It all started in the Sunset six decades ago

It was 1958 when G.E.T. Department store opened up a neighborhood plant nursery at the corner of 45th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard in San Francisco. In 1968 the small store moved to a larger location (G.E.T.'s former tire shop and gas station), just down the block, and the name changed to Sloat Garden Center. In 2000 we moved to our current, and much larger, location between 45th & 46th Avenues. Over the years, 12 more stores were added in San Francisco, Marin, and Contra Costa counties. Sloat Garden Center has grown to become the Bay Area's largest independent, locally owned garden center.



Sloat Garden Center in 1968

### The Sloat Blvd store today

Our original store has changed over the years, but it's still stocked with everything a gardener seeks, from California native plants, to vegetable and flower starts, soil, pottery, tools and safe garden remedies

We recently asked store manager Gerry O'Donoghue what makes the store unique (besides its longevity).

"Our customers are really hardy!" he laughs. "They're accustomed to living and gardening in fog, so they come out in all types of weather."

Gerry and staff like to recommend the right plant for the right area, so they stock plants that will succeed in the fog. He has one main tip for gardeners in the Sunset and beyond. "Make sure your soil is well prepared and amended with good, rich organic matter," he says. "This is the first line of defense and first secret of gardening. If plants are well established in good rich soil, they'll be happy."



Gerry, Oliver, Shannon, Bryndan and Cindy

### Growing up with Sloat

Sloat Blvd. store Asst. Manager Cindy Bonilla grew up visiting Sloat Garden Center with her grandparents every weekend.

"Every Sunday when I was little we went to church, we went to Lucky's grocery store, and then we went to Sloat," says Cindy. "My grandma just loved plants. She was always really into gardening."

Cindy is the 4th generation in her family to live in the same house in the Sunset, not too far from the store. The plants her grandmother planted in the backyard (some purchased from Sloat in the 70's, 80's and 90's) are still thriving. "Her Camellias and Bougainvillea were the backbones of her garden."

The horticultural tradition lives on now in Cindy's own family. "My kids are used to us having a lot of plants. It's a jungle at our house and kind of excessive. But how many other moms do you know who make oxygen for their family?"

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

### San Francisco

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

*Hours: 9-6:30*

### Novato

2000 Novato Blvd.  
at Wilson  
(415) 897-2169

### San Rafael

1580 Lincoln Ave.  
just off Hwy. 101  
(415) 453-3977

### Kentfield

*M-F: 8-6:30  
Sat & Sun: 8:30-6:30*

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

### E. Blithedale:

*M-F 8-6:30  
Sat/Sun  
8:30-6:30*

at La Goma

### 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*

### Concord

1555 Kirker Pass Rd.  
(925) 681-0550

### 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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& SF only

Visit us on the web: [www.sloatgardens.com](http://www.sloatgardens.com)

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(or as noted above)

Celebrate *Earth Day* on April 22nd!

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8 SLOAT NOTEBOOK Early Spring 2018

## Bay Area Gardening Guide:

## March & April

### Plant

Prepare planting beds for spring. Test soil for pH, nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, and add appropriate supplements. We recommend amending with **Sloat Loam Builder** or **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus**.

It's vegetable planting time! Grow your own groceries with organic vegetable starts & seeds: lettuce, tomatoes, herbs, zucchini and peppers.



Plant your favorite spring annuals. Petunias, Alyssum, Marigolds, Cosmos and Lobelia.

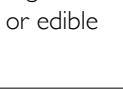


We carry plants that will provide flowers and foliage for shaded spaces: choose Begonias, Heucheras, and Impatiens.



Plant Gladiolus and Dahlias for summer color.

Choose a large tomato cage now, because your plants will grow larger!



Plant a tree, shrub, flower or edible for Earth Day or Arbor Day.

Rhododendrons and azaleas are budding and blooming. Feed them with **E.B. Stone Organics Azalea Camellia & Gardenia Food** after flowering.

### Fertilize

Stock up on top quality, plant-specific fertilizers: we recommend **E.B. Stone Organics Rose & Flower, Tomato & Vegetable** and **Citrus & Fruit foods**. Use **E.B. Stone Organics Sure Start** fertilizer for new plantings to establish them quickly.

### Prune/Maintain

WaterWise tip: For new plantings, use water-holding polymer **Soil Moist**. The non-toxic granules hold water longer than soil alone; minimizing moisture loss to evaporation.

Water early in the morning to prevent wet foliage. Wet foliage attracts snails and fungal diseases. Non-toxic **Sluggo** helps keep slugs and snails under control.

Stop aphids early with **Bonide Neem Oil**, **Bonide Rose Rx 3-in-1** or **Monterey Take Down Spray**. Spray at day's end after bees have stopped foraging.



Release ladybugs, praying mantis, and other beneficial insects to help control aphids, mites, whiteflies, and other garden pests.



Use **Sloat Mini Bark** or **Forest Mulch Plus** on established and new plantings to reduce moisture loss and keep roots cool while inhibiting weed seed germination.

Prune freeze damaged plants now (if you haven't already). But, you should wait to prune spring blooming shrubs until after flowering.



Spring is the best time to repot houseplants and give them their first feeding.

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)