



Garden Notes

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Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

🐞 Please send us questions about gardening

Reminder: Garden Tour is April 19 (see upcoming events below)

Tidbits from March's "Titillating Tomato Talk":

- Determinate (bush) varieties crop once—best for canning
- Red mulch under tomatoes increases crop
- Cherry tomatoes are most likely to overwinter
- Heirlooms are more varied but hybrid cultivars are more disease resistant
- Wait two or three years before planting where tomato relatives such as eggplant, peppers or potatoes have been grown
- Choose stocky, 6-8" plants, remove all but top 2 or 3 sets of leaves and bury stem up to them; if too leggy, bury stem horizontally and will root at nodes
- Worm castings added to soil help repel whitefly
- Water deeply but less often—shallow watering can cause blossom drop; keep foliage dry (but wash off if gets too dusty)
- Yellow tomatoes are not less acid than red, but they have more sugar
- Blossom end rot is due to calcium deficiency (some people add Tums!)
- The cause of leaf rolling is not known
- Leaf yellowing (if not due to over-watering) means too much heat or light so give shade



Courtesy of Sharron Neyer



Nutsedge, Scourge of the Garden! (Photo from Wikipedia)

Bob Traer asked about how to control this pesky garden invader. First, how can you tell a sedge from a grass? The leaves look a lot alike when plants are young, but the stem area is triangular in sedges and round in grasses. Both yellow nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*, the source of tiger nuts) and purple nutsedge (*Cyperus rotundus*) revel in the conditions needed to grow a good lawn, but will infest flower beds happily too. The mature plants are about 3 ft tall and resemble the common umbrella plant to which they are related.

Ornamental of the Month

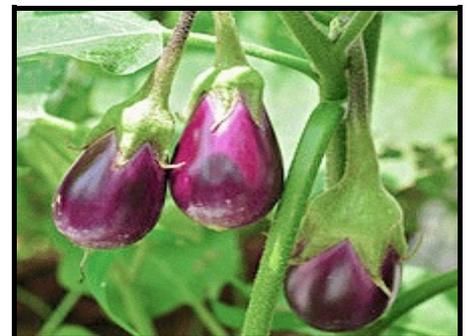
Brugmansia



Angel's Trumpet has ten inch flowers with a wonderful scent in the evening. To 10 ft tall and wide. Flowers appear in cycles most of the year. Pink, yellow, and white varieties are available. Full sun or part shade, moderate water. Frost-tender but usually regrows from larger stems. Evergreen, prune in spring to manage size, easy to root from cuttings. All parts, especially the leaves, are poisonous.

Edible of the Month

Solanum melongena



Eggplant (aubergine) is available in large, small, round, elongated, purple, yellow, white, green, and striped varieties. Eaten in many ways in many cultures. Frost tender perennial. Culture is same as for tomatoes. Allow 3 years between planting eggplant, tomatoes, or peppers in the same location to reduce build up of pests and diseases. (Photo of young fruit from Wikipedia)

The plants spread by rhizomes and small, round tubers (seen at bottom right of photo) as well as by seed. The tubers and roots can be found as deep as 1 ft, although most are closer to the surface, and the rhizomes can spread up to 2 ft from the parent plant. Patches spread rapidly.

The first line of defense is vigilance. Dig plants up along with the surrounding soil out 6 inches from the plant, and to a depth of 6 inches. Throw the soil in the trash—composting won't kill the plants. Any rhizomes or tubers left in the ground will sprout (even tubers small enough to fit through a soil sieve, so don't bother sifting). Remove new plants as soon as you see them.

Covering an area with landscape cloth and mulch will reduce growth, but the tubers can sit in the ground for several years and still sprout.

Alas, nutsedges are resistant to most herbicides. Ones with good reviews are Bonide Sedge Ender, Monterey Nutgrass Killer, and SedgeHammer, but they can be fiddley to dilute and apply (and expensive). No herbicide is guaranteed to kill all the plants, and most won't affect tubers, so repeat applications are needed.

The final possibility for large areas of lawn already invaded is to embrace the nutgrass like the LA County Arboretum, which doesn't use herbicides, has done.

Favorite Quote:

"I cultivate my garden, and my garden cultivates me." Robert Brault



Whiteflies: These little pests attack garden plants like the holly-leaf cherry (*Prunus illicifolia*) at left. Whiteflies are not really flies but relatives of aphids and scale. The tiny white moth-like adults lay eggs on the underside of leaves. Nymphs produce a waxy coating which may be plain or consist of ribbons, creating the illusion of flowers like

the ones above. Like aphids, adult whiteflies suck plant juices and produce a sweet secretion that encourages sooty mold growth, especially on citrus. You can wipe them off, remove entire leaves (bag them and throw them away), or wash them off with a strong spray of water. Make your garden attractive to birds, lacewings, spiders, ladybugs, etc. Control Argentine ants which like to eat the 'honeydew' and will protect whiteflies. If all else fails, using insecticidal soap or horticultural oil sprays will minimize damage to beneficial insects.

Upcoming events and more:

April 8: Garden Club—6:30-8:30 pm, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, Claremont.

Talk at 7pm by Chris Verma: "Backyard Birds in Claremont"

April 19: Claremont Eclectic: A Tour of Six Local Gardens. Tickets available on RSABG website, at Rio de Ojas, Vom Fass, Claremont Heritage. \$20 includes admission to RSABG on the day and once the following month.

More info on RSABG website and at www.sustainableclaremont.org

Armstrong classes: <http://www.armstronggarden.com/pages/classes>

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden: www.rsabg.org/upcoming-events

Huntington Library: www.huntington.org/WebAssets/Templates/content.aspx?id=538

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: "Esculentus" means "edible" (yellow nutsedge tubers are sold as "tiger nuts". "Solanum" means "quieting", a reference to the narcotic properties of some species.

Plant miscellanea: Some seeds will germinate as soon as the embryo and food store are developed. Others enter a period of "seed dormancy" and require certain conditions, such as a cold period or fire, before they will start into growth.

Things to do in April

General

- ✓ Feed most plants
- ✓ Prune frost-damaged wood when new growth can be seen
- ✓ Water as necessary

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Pull/hoe weeds
- ✓ Release beneficial insects
- ✓ Plants from the fennel, mustard, and daisy families will attract beneficials

Edibles

- ✓ At end of month, plant corn, eggplant, peppers, melons, squash
- ✓ Thin fruit on deciduous fruit trees
- ✓ Thin vegetable crops sown in March
- ✓ Sow a final row of heat-tolerant peas

Ornamentals

- ✓ Put in drought-tolerant plants
- ✓ Plant geraniums (pelargoniums)
- ✓ Prune espaliers
- ✓ Plant containers and hanging baskets
- ✓ Shear hedges and prune evergreens to shape (unless spring blooming)
- ✓ Deadhead, tidy, and feed roses
- ✓ Plant summer annuals
- ✓ Plant cannas, callas, daylilies, glads, iris, tuberous begonias, calladiums

Please send photos and info about plants you've grown, gardens you've visited, gardening lore you've learned, questions you have. Sue Schenk, editor

The Metropolitan Water District is offering rebates for turf removal, rain barrels, soil moisture sensor systems. Info at: <http://socialwatersmart.com/index.php/>

Facebook: Claremont Garden Club
Instagram: Claremont_Garden_Club