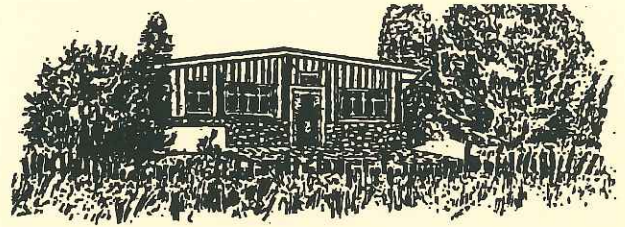


NEWS & NOTES *of the UCSC FARM and GARDEN*



Issue 65 December 1994

Jeff Arnett & Beth Benjamin, Editors



HOLIDAY PARTY & GIFT BOUTIQUE

*Sunday, December 4, 1-4 pm
ID Building, 1515 Pacific Avenue*

Get into the Holiday Spirit at our annual winter get-together. We'll eat, drink, visit, and shop for Farm & Garden Goodies at the ID Building, a popular mercantile on the Pacific Garden Mall. All are welcome to join in the party!

December

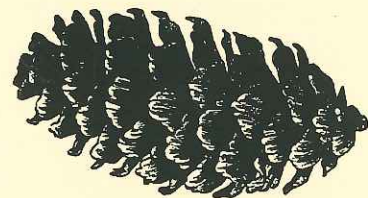
*"That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs, which shake against the cold
Bare, ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang."*

—Wm. Shakespeare

WINTER PRUNING WORKSHOP

*Saturday and Sunday, May 6-7, 10:30 am-2pm
Barn Theater Parking Lot, corner of Bay & High
Streets, UCSC*

Join Jim Nelson, local organic farmer and orchard manager, for this popular workshop offering tips on how to maintain your trees and shrubs. The workshop will include hands-on demonstrations of various pruning techniques, with plenty of time for your questions. Bring a lunch and warm clothes. *Note: \$5.00 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members; \$10.00 for non-members.*



Noteworthy news . . . Friends are encouraged to renew their membership early this year. Who knows what will befall us in this Newt era of elephants and other large beasts who know not the liberal joys of gardening? President Jody Stix Garsia's recent letter offers enticing membership benefits, including a 10% discount at both December's Holiday Tea (on Friends' merchandise) and the Spring Plant Sale. What a deal . . .

Led by Jim Leap and Jody Stix Garsia, the Friends first annual Harvest Festival last month was a squashing success (not to mention many-appled and Mariposaed). Over 400 hundred friends attended with a harvestful of funds raised, a large share for an apprentice scholarship via the raffle organized by apprentices Annette Olson & Ethan Sanford. Director Margaret Bonaccorso's bake sale was a delicious and profitable addition while the Life Lab's Bob Greenleaf entertained and enlightened our youngest harvesters. Thanks to all the many Friends and apprentices (too numerous to mention) who made this celebratory event so splendid.

Marc Buchanan, assistant professor of environmental studeies at UCSC, is testing the viability of on-farm composting of municipal waste and cardboard in a project funded by the California Integrated Waste Management Board. He will monitor the subsequent performance of the compost in vegetable production. Meanwhile, the Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association (any Friends familiar with its work?) has developed a biodegradable compost bag made of recycled craft paper with a cellulose lining. An idea for our Produce Cart? Bags are \$8/dz. or 24 for \$12. For more information, write to: BDFGA, P.O. Box 550, Kimberton, PA 19442. Compost on!

Friends continue to gather recipes utilizing the F & G vinegars. We plan to publish a small booklet of favorite recipes to accompany our prized vinegars. Please send recipes to Jeff Arnett, Porter College, UCSC, SC, CA 95064. Each contributor will receive a complimentary copy of the recipe booklet and a vinegar of your choice.

CALL FOR WORDS: *NEWS & NOTES* continues to solicit articles, poems, recipes, illustrations, and other contributions from CASFS staff, Friends and other gardening enthusiasts. Deadline for the winter *News & Notes* is February 1. On-campus contributions can be sent to Jeff Arnett, Porter Faculty Services. Or send to *News & Notes*, c/o Friends . . ., UCSC Farm, Santa Cruz, CA 95064. Call Jeff Arnett (425-1750) or Beth Benjamin for more information.

BREAKING CONCRETE

*I would, for sure, have expected crab grass, bermuda grass,
foxtail.*

*I might have expected sweet abyssum,
that wild spender of its seed,
if I had thought about it.
(which I didn't.)*

*I would have known of
wild oats waving,
dandelions, and all their air-borne family,
plantain, purslane, and filaree,
all these sturdy wasteland plants
growing in the cracks,
pushing their way through cement and asphalt,
trying to take back the earth again,
to make room for growing things, for life.*

*But somehow, I hadn't expected
the reddish-purple plumes of flowers
(escaped, long ago, from someone's garden,
taking over the concrete cracks of sidewalk;
the four-o'clocks in kaleidoscopic colors,
(too fragile to withstand even one day's heat,
the silken skirts of California poppies,
claiming an inch or two of dirt
where the asphalt had broken.*

*I hadn't counted on
the surge of feeling
engendered by the flowers,
by the swirl of colors,
by their brash insistence.*

*Their roots break by millimeters the cement walk,
thrust into the bonds of my heart.
Their shapes and smells change the geography of my life,
probe roots into the concrete stronghold of
my self.*

— Ruth K. Royal (local poet, longtime Friend and former F&G Director)

Editor's note: We hope Ruth's lyrical offering will inspire other poet-gardeners to contribute their work to *News & Notes*.

DE-BUGGING YOUR GARDEN

One of the questions most frequently asked by organic gardeners is, "How do I keep the bugs from feasting on the beautiful, delicious produce I worked so hard to grow?" If the eating habits of cabbage worms, cucumber beetles, leaf hoppers, borers, spider mites or aphids, to name a few, have tempted you to declare war with some chemical spray, read on! Now is the time to formulate a strategy for next year's garden that will clearly make it less attractive to the enemy.

The first step is to practice regular garden clean-up. Get rid of all the fallen leaves, post-harvest vegetable plants, dropped fruit and anything else that will give easy shelter to snails, slugs* and harmful insects. If the refuse is clean and healthy, add it to your compost pile. If it is diseased, slimy or buggy, put it in a plastic sack and get rid of it. Even organic mulches can become breeding places for pests and diseases. Dig it under and use fresh for your winter crops.

The next step is to research which plant varieties are most resistant to the bugs that tend to frequent your garden. New varieties are constantly being developed which are resistant to various insects and diseases. The list grows longer with every new seed catalogue, and it is smart to grow plants that have a built-in protection from the ravenous hoards.

A third strategy in the organic gardener's arsenal of weapons is to know which plants tend to protect other plants from insects, and even moles, mice and ground squirrels. Try planting chives next to lettuce and peas to keep the aphids away. This also works for roses and other flowers. A few cloves of garlic planted around roses will keep both black spot and mildew from attacking, and garlic is very effective in discouraging mice and other rodents.

The smart use of plants not only foils the pests, they also make a nice addition to your eating pleasure. Almost any kind of mint, especially spearmint, will protect the cabbage family. Place the mint plants among the cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage and the insects that usually move in will move out. Thyme, tansy and rosemary are also good at discouraging cabbage moths and worms, while basil will help to keep your tomatoes free from both disease and insects. Savory is the best choice for protecting beans, and rue is known to keep insects off a great many flowers, vegetables and even trees and shrubs.

Let's not forget the value of flowers in the garden. Not only do they add beauty and attract bees for pollination, many of them are also potent deterrents of insects and diseases. Painted daisy is so effective in keeping aphids and other insects away that it is used to make insecticides containing pyrethrum. Geraniums attract Japanese

beetles and thus keep these bugs off other flowers and vegetables. White flowered geraniums seem to work best. Nasturtiums will help guard your vine crops including cucumbers, squash and melons, while marigolds are known for their ability to keep aphids and other insects from inhabiting the garden.

Vegetables themselves can help to ward off garden pests. Tomatoes planted close to asparagus will control the asparagus beetle problem. Planted around melon, squash or cucumber plants, radishes will drive off the spotted cucumber beetle. Beans planted near potatoes will send Mexican bean beetles and Colorado potato beetles packing, and don't forget to be generous with the garlic throughout the garden.

Finally, a good way to outsmart the pests is to move things around. Rotate crops instead of planting them in the same place year after year. Mix your plants too. Alternate rows of crops to make it harder for the bugs to find what they like.

If organic gardening has seemed rather daunting, leaving you with a lot of munched-on produce for your efforts, take heart. You are smarter than the bugs! A little work and planning now can make your next garden a delicious success.

— Margaret Bonaccorso

*Editor's note: You may not be surprised that slugs consume several times their own weight each day, but did you know that they have green blood, more teeth than a shark (up to 27,000), sometimes feed on other slugs, and can safely crawl across broken glass? For more fascinating facts about the UCSC namesake, see *The Field Guide to the Slug* by David George Gordon, Sasquatch Books. Gordon offers an alternative to salting slugs: Surround the plants they love with a copper strip. Slugs won't cross it, he claims. He also suggests landscaping with plants they hate, like lettuce, lilies, strawberries, primroses and narcissus.

TIME TO GO NATIVE

If the drought taught gardeners one thing, it is the advantage of re-creating the natural habitat right where we live by using plants native to our area. This means, for example, planting toyon, buckeye, sugar bush or purple sage on the dry slopes and canyons, redbud, columbine, and blue eyed grass in more wooded areas and California poppies everywhere. Fall is the best time for planting natives.

Seed for Clarkia, California poppies and other native annuals should be sown now. Tree, shrubs and ground covers should also be planted from containers to benefit from the winter rains. All natives, though drought resistant or tolerant, need to be watered occasionally until well established.

In the past it was easier to find rhododendrons from the Himalayas than it was to find natives in the nurseries. Happily, the stock of natives increased during the drought and now many are available at garden centers.* Choosing which plants to use can begin with evaluating the location of your area. Open slopes and canyon sites are the natural habitat of manzanita, ceanothus, bush monkey flower, toyon and coffeeberry, to name a few. Since these fall into the category of chaparral, they are "fire flora," depending on periodic burning for healthy growth. It is wise, therefore, to keep them more as specimen plants, well pruned, and with possibly a good surrounding ground cover.

In our foothills and wooded areas some natives that will do well are California buckeye, ground iris, Western redbud, Fremont's star lily, California fuchsia, coffee fern, virgin's bower, red berry, service berry, California rose, sticky monkey flower, and red-flowering current.

Near the coast, try St. Catherine's lace, showy island snap dragon, malva rosa, Catalina Island cherry, seaside sunflower, seaside daisy, yarrow, bush lupine and plants in the mallow family.

To enjoy natives, it isn't necessary to replant your entire yard. Since they need less water and attention than is required by lawns and most non-native plants, it is best to set aside an area where their requirements can be met. Used even in a small way, native plants add beauty, demand less maintenance, conserve water, and also bring California's past back into the present.

— Margaret Bonaccorso

*Editor's note: The Native Revival Nursery, 8022 Soquel Drive, Aptos Village (684-1811) and our UCSC neighbors, The Arboretum, both offer the discerning Friend an intriguing variety of native plants.

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