

GROWING PAINS



Newsletter for the MiraCosta Horticulture Club of Oceanside

December 2019

Garden Room, Alta Vista Botanical
Gardens, 1270 Vale Terrace Drive, Vista
CA 92084 Office phone 760-945-3954

Web-site: www.mchclub.org

President: Ed Lopez lopezedward@cox.net

Secretary: Susan Duey susanduey@cox.net

Editor: Kim Cyr 760-598-3368

e-mail: ritz4petz@roadrunner.com

Announcements

Holiday Potluck- December 14th, 2019 at Alta Vista
Botanical Gardens clubhouse.

Doors open 11 am

Holiday Luncheon served 11:30 to 12:30

Please bring a dish to share, the club will provide a
baked ham

12:30 Chinese Raffle

1:30 Poinsettia Raffle/Drawing

2:30 to 3:00 Social time and clean up

President's Report

Happy Thanksgiving to Everyone:

This is the season to be thankful and I am
especially grateful and thankful for the friends and
great conversations at our meetings.

The November meeting was very successful and
fun. Pat Flanagan presented an educational and
informative program about butterflies. Did you
notice the yellow cloudless sulphur butterflies flying
outside the windows during his presentation? And,
those yellow butterflies were putting on a show on
the patio during the raffle.

The workshop by Kim Cyr was very successful, and
I saw lots of very creative necklaces. I also noticed
a lot of members making arrangements in Xmas
containers at Susan's table. Thanks to our
members who brought in the Xmas themed pots
and containers.

The raffle was a huge success, and what a
selection of wonderful and unusual plants. I want
to thank everyone for all of their efforts to make the
meeting a great success.

Thanks to Becky Edwards for the food setup,
Connie for meeting and greeting members/guests,
Kim Cyr for the necklace workshop, Linda Herrill for
the generous plant donations, and Salli Blakesley
and others who brought in the plants and helped
arrange everything for the raffle. Thanks to Cindi,
Ed, Connie and Susan who helped with the set-up
and clean-up of our meeting room. I can always
count on Art and Dottie, taking care of the ticket
sales and successful raffle.

I want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.
See you at the December 14, 2019 potluck. I am
bringing my favorite casserole to share. The club
provides the ham, and we did have a signup sheet
at the meeting. You can call me at home at 760-
295-5917 if you have any questions or suggestions.
I want to hear from you.

Welcome new members:

Bylaw reminder: We welcome guests. We invite
you to attend our meetings, and after 2 meetings,
we ask you to join and pay dues to Connie at the
front desk. We have quality programs and
workshops and eagerly welcome guests to join our
Club and look forward to your ideas and
suggestions.

Workshops:

We will have the workshops on the patio, weather
permitting, and will have more table space to allow

room for everyone. We will have chairs at the ends of the table for those who need to sit. Our January workshop is going to be decorating/painting clay pots and potting bulbs. We have lots of information and suggestions and will give demonstrations on how to grow bulbs in shallow dishes in water, and decorate with rocks along with the traditional potting mix. I have even seen an old Herndon serving dish used as a planter for daffodils that made a lively centerpiece.

Looking Ahead: Workshops

Do you have a favorite plant you can share with the group? Can you collect seed or propagate it? Our members really like to share their plants, so think about ways you can share your favorite plants.

We are planning a seed exchange and information workshop on new gardening tools on the market. Bring in your favorite garden tool and tell us why it is your favorite.

May your Thanksgiving be filled with peace, love and happiness!

Best Regards, Ed Lopez, President

Chinese Auction Gift Exchange

At our holiday potluck we will have a Chinese auction gift exchange. If you want to participate, please bring one plant with a value of \$20 or more, or a wrapped garden related gift with a value of \$20 or more.

You will be given a raffle ticket. When your number is called, you may choose a gift from the exchange table and open it, or take another member's gift (if it is not frozen).

A gift is frozen when it is taken by a third member. The member you take it from cannot immediately take it back from you but must take something from the exchange table or someone else before he/she can take the gift back from you.

If you have questions, call Dottie. 760-806-6678.

This is a fun game as long as you "don't get too attached" to the gift you draw. Please no squeezing, peeking, lifting, or shaking but HAVE FUN!

PENNIES FOR PINES



What to Do with Extra Fruits and Veggies?

Grangettos.com

You love growing your own produce; it's healthier, you save money, and it's fun! But, as any gardener knows, you always end up with way too much come harvest time. Even the healthiest eating family tires of zucchini pancakes, zucchini fritters, zucchini parmesan and more when it's served every day of the week. So, what do you do with all those extras? There are several things you can do to use up all those delicious fruits and veggies, which is great news, because nothing is better than growing your own!

Produce au Naturel

One of the easiest things is simply to eat more raw fruits and veggies. Don't reach for the potato chip, go out and grab a fresh green pepper or a couple carrots. They're crunchy, they're delicious, and they're good for you, too. Nothing tastes quite as good as an entrée salad, fresh from the garden. Add some fresh mozzarella, a vinaigrette made with your own herbs, and bon appétit!

Do the Can-Can

Years ago before refrigeration, our ancestors perfected the art of canning food. By doing some simple processing, depending on the food, and sealing it in an air-tight container. Canned food lasts a long time on the shelf so you can enjoy it long after growing season. As mentioned earlier, canning is an art; if the jars aren't sterilized just so and sealed just right, you could walk into your pantry expecting delicious tomato sauce only to find a soured mess. Don't let that scare you; there are local classes to teach you how, not to mention several good books.

The Bar is Open – The Juice Bar

Another healthy alternative is making delicious and nutritious juices with extra produce. Fruits and veggies make excellent juices – even mixed together – and there are several affordable juicers on the market. A personal favorite is beets, apples, and carrots; it's a sweet sensation!

Keep it Smoooooth!

Smoothies are a close relative of juices. These yummy concoctions can be made in your blender – or any number of specialty appliances. Essentially, smoothies are fresh fruits and/or veggies, typically some ice, and maybe some yogurt or protein powder. They're a meal on the go and perfect for post-workout refreshment.

Oh No, Not Zucchini Tetrazzini Again!

There are recipes and there are recipes. Once you've run the gamut from zucchini break to zucchini waffles, with a little research, you can still come up with new, delicious recipes for that extra produce. There are many vegetarian magazines and cookbooks with imaginative recipes that will make your family happy to see extra zucchini on the vine.

Soup's On!

Almost everyone loves a hot bowl of soup. The good news is many vegetable soups freeze very well. If you have favorite recipes, or find some new ones, spend a day making a pot or two (or three) of soup, eat a little and freeze the rest. You'll have healthy "fast food" waiting for you in your freezer, year-round.

The Circle of Life – Composting for the Future

Rather than toss your peels and scraps in the trash, start composting. All it takes is a little space for the pile or bin, a little work, and time. You can give next season's garden some incredible, nutrient-rich support using this natural form of recycling.

It Takes a Village...

...to eat a garden. This last idea is a great way to help out neighbors, friends, and family members who don't garden, yet love fresh produce. Share! Put together a selection of fruits and veggies and give them away. Not only does that solve your surplus issue, but the receivers get great, nutritious food, and save money at the grocery store. You'll be everyone's favorite gardener in no time!

An Orchid in a Pear Tree?

Grangettos.com

Well, not exactly, but close. Did you know that you can actually grow orchids on your trees? You can, if you follow these instructions. Orchids add an extra touch of color to your trees, giving your landscaping a beauty boost. Given the year-round warm climate in Southern California, you can do this with many different types of orchids without worrying about cold weather damage. Of course, you can also hang your orchids in baskets, which allows you to easily move them from tree to tree or bring them indoors to change your décor.

Orchids are unique in that they don't need soil to grow and bloom. In fact, soil will actually smother the roots and kill the plants. We're dealing with only one of the three types of orchids here, the epiphyte or "air plant." The others, lithophytes ("rock plant"

growing around rocks) and terrestrials (growing in loamy material on the jungle floor) aren't suitable for hanging in trees.

The epiphyte varieties of orchids have adapted to use trees for support; the orchids' roots cling to the trees' bark. However, orchids are not parasites; the only food they get from trees is any decaying organic matter in the crooks of branches or animal droppings as they run down the trees when it rains. Orchids get their water directly from the humidity in the air. During dry spells, the plants use water stored in their thick stems, called pseudobulbs.

Up, Up and Away – Hanging Your Orchids

It's fairly easy to spruce up your trees with beautiful orchids. Try these simple steps:

The first step is to choose the right orchids for your trees. Many types of orchids require filtered sunlight so you need to select a tree that can provide this year-round. Oak trees are great matches for Cattleya and certain Brassica orchids. Those in the Schomburgkia genus do well with more sunlight so you can hang them on palms and other open-canopied trees. Flat-leaf Oncidiums, Phalaenopsis, and Cattleya do well on mango and avocado trees.

Orchids, being epiphytes, need good air circulation so you must hang them on unobstructed areas of your trees. The process is more successful if done in the spring. If your area is subject to cold winds, it's best to hang your orchids on the sides of the trees opposite the wind so that your trees act as windbreaks. Once you've located the right spot, tie your orchids to the tree with green nursery tape or nylon string. This provides support for your orchids until their root systems bond with the trees. Typically, it's safe to remove the tape or string after one year.

If you prefer the "mobile" option, you can use hanging baskets. No soil, though! Fill your baskets half full with orchid bark or sphagnum moss. Then put your orchids in the baskets and add more bark or moss. So if you want a quick, easy way to add colorful beauty to your yard, hang some orchids today!



How to Store Fruits and Veggies

Grangettos.com

When every penny in the budget counts, there's no room for wasting food. Yet, American families throw away almost 500 pounds per year of produce that's gone bad. That's about 14% of all the food they buy, and costs each family about \$600.00 per year. Added up, that means as a nation, we toss out almost \$43 billion dollars of brown bananas, moldy peaches, wilted spinach, and a soupy substance that used to be lettuce every year. Interestingly, the answer to this problem lies in chemistry. No, not more preservatives; the natural chemistry of plants holds the key to cutting down on food waste.

It's a Gas, Gas, Gas

Like every other living thing on the planet, fruits and vegetables breathe. But, they don't stop when we pick them. Respiration continues long after harvesting; not only that, but certain plants have gas. Ethylene gas, that is. Ethylene gas is a ripening agent. While some fruits and veggies emit ethylene, others are sensitive to it. So sensitive, in fact, that being near a "gas-producer" will cause them to over-ripen, or "go bad". Kale, for instance, is extremely ethylene-sensitive. If you put it in the vegetable drawer with apples or peaches, kale will turn yellow and wilt in a few short days. Put another way: Grandma was right. One bad apple really does spoil the barrel.

One thing that everyone can do to reduce waste is to take sides; as in, ethylene-releasing produce on this side of the 'fridge, and ethylene-sensitive produce on that side. The key is to keep the two away from each other.

Cold Snap

Temperature plays a big part in respiration, too. The warmer the temperature, the more the fruits and plants breathe and the faster they decay. Too much of a respiration reduction is a bad thing, though. If you keep your produce in air-tight bags, it will suffocate and spoil much faster. Also, some produce is cold-sensitive; refrigeration will ruin it. Potatoes, onions, winter squash, and garlic do much better in a cool (not cold) dark, dry area where they'll easily last up to a month, maybe more.

Putting It All Together and Keeping It All Separate

Bearing in mind ethylene and temperature sensitivities, here's a convenient list of which fruits and veggies to refrigerate, which need to stay at room temperature, and which don't go together, no matter the temperature.

KEEP THESE GASSERS COOL

Apples, Apricots, Blueberries, Cantaloupe, Grapes, Green onions, Honeydew, Mushrooms

KEEP THESE GASSERS OUT OF THE COLD

Avocados, Bananas, unripe, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Tomatoes

KEEP THESE FRUITS AND VEGGIES AWAY FROM ALL GASSERS

Asparagus, Bananas, ripe, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Chard, Cauliflower, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Kale, Kiwi fruit, Lettuce, Leafy Greens, Parsley, Peas, Potatoes, Spinach, Squash, Sweet potatoes, Watermelon

Wholeness is Healthiness

Another great way to prolong the life of your produce is to keep it whole until you plan to eat it. It's been shown that even tearing the stem out of an apple allows certain microorganisms to start growing and the apple will spoil faster. The same goes for greens, vine-ripened tomatoes, and other bunched fruits and veggies, like grapes and celery.

Good, Better, Best

These are some good ways to cut down on produce waste. An even better suggestion is to simply buy the amount you need, when you need it. This is made easier by visiting the many local Farmers' Markets available today. The best way, of course, is to grow your own produce. You know where it's been and you can pick it as you need it. Not only will you cut down on waste, but you'll get the best nutritional value possible and save money at the same time.

Merry Christmas!!

Happy Holidays!!