

GROWING PAINS



Newsletter for the MiraCosta Horticulture Club of Oceanside

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Announcements

- June meeting starts at 12:00 noon.
- The next meeting is our last one for the season. It is a potluck and working meeting. We all get to strategize on ideas for the upcoming season. It is important for the club to be what you want it to be. There will also be awards given out.
- Membership dues need to be paid by the end of June in order to remain active in the club and to be listed in the next yearbook. The June meeting is a perfect time to take care of this. Otherwise, please contact Connie Kemp on mailing it in, cfbkemp@gmail.com.

President's Message

I spent Saturday at the plant sale. When I got there, it was so impressive how well organized everything was. This is a testament to how much work goes into setting up our annual plant sale. Many donors were contacted, and plants were picked up by the team. The Pinery, which I highlighted in the last newsletter, was very generous. I loved their ornamental Pomegranate shrubs and Lavender. We had lots of Stargazer Lilies and Gloxinia, Bromeliads and house plants. There were also some specimen succulents.

The plant sale is our fundraiser for our primary club objective – horticulture scholarships and funding for interns and other projects. For everyone who was

able to contribute any amount of time on the plant sale, THANK YOU. Thank you, Salli and Greg, for making the location available. It works perfectly. Carol, thank you for all the time and effort you ALWAYS put into managing this event.

Our gross income is about \$7,400 before taxes and expenses. This is better than last year. Carol arranged for the extra plants to be donated to A Last Chance to Live, a charity that supports animals that otherwise would be euthanized. It was interesting to find out who the customers were. Many that I spoke with had not been to the sale before but heard of it from a neighbor, saw it posted on Nextdoor or in community fliers. A few were drive-bys! It was advertised on the website and our Facebook page. As Carol communicated with customers, she was able to get at least 15 to sign up for next year's plant sale notification. We gained five new members. There were some very large sales.

Thank you to Shantih Black, a recent new member, for picking up plants from the Encinitas area AND approaching nurseries that were not on the pickup list. She made succulent bowls and arrangements for the sale. Thank you Kim, your dish gardens and décor were beautiful and sold well.

We are a unique club for what we do. I am so appreciative of each member's uniqueness. Thank you EVERYONE for being part of this group.



Grow Your Garden @ the Library

Hi Garden enthusiasts,

Just wanted to let you know that we have restarted our Grow Your Garden crop swap plant sharing series at the Carlsbad City Libraries and that you are welcome to bring plants, succulents or crops and swap at any or all of the events.

The events are a great way to learn different gardening skills, talk to fellow gardeners and diversify your plants.

<http://www.carlsbadca.gov/civicax/calendar/inc/blobfetch.aspx?BlobID=35584>

Crop Swaps and Workshops: 10 a.m. – noon,
(Workshops begin at 10:30 a.m.)

May 26 Composting 101 (Dove Library)

June 23 Kitchen Garden Basics (Cole Library)

July 28 Propagating Lilacs (Dove Library)

Aug. 25 Fall Plantings (Cole Library)

Sept. 22 Preserve Your Garden Crops (Dove Library)

Please share this with anyone you think would be interested. Look forward to seeing you at our Grow Your Garden events, Darin

Official Sponsors: Carlsbad Community Gardens
City of Carlsbad's Public Works, The Ecology Center

Find Out Which Type of Mulch Is Right for Your Garden

By Curtis Adams

Mulch composed of decomposed, or decomposing, material provides a home for beneficial organisms that break the organic materials in the mulch into simpler components that can be used by plants. Mulch provides a cushioning layer that lessens the impact of rain falling on the soil, thus reducing soil compaction and erosion, and improving water absorption. Mulch forms a barrier that prevents evaporation and acts as a thermal insulator to moderate extreme changes in soil temperature. Mulch shades the soil surface and blocks seeds that require exposure to light for germination, as is the case with many garden weeds.

Organic mulches:

Shredded bark. This is made from the outer layer of trees and is a byproduct of the lumber industry. Trees used for shredded bark mulch include

hardwoods, cedar, hemlock, pine and redwood. Coarsely shredded grades last longer but don't look as nice in some settings as finer grades. Over time, shredded bark breaks down to enrich the soil with organic matter.

Pros: Suppresses weeds very well, offers good moisture and temperature control, allows water permeation, and breaks down over time to help build soil and support soil organisms.

Cons: Needs to be replenished on a regular basis (one to three years) and fades over time. Coarser grades can float away, and finer grades can become compacted if applied too thickly.

Pine bark nuggets. These are actual chunks of pine bark and are available in a variety of sizes. Larger pieces last longer but have a coarser appearance and a greater tendency to float away or otherwise migrate around the garden.

Pros: Similar to shredded bark, but pine bark nuggets are slower to break down than other wood and bark products and can hold their color for several years.

Cons: Larger pieces tend to move around in the landscape, it's more difficult to walk on than shredded products, and it has a coarser appearance.

Shredded or chipped wood. Shredded wood from a clean source that has been partially composted is a good all-around choice. Chips from arborists can get hot while the contained leaves and green materials are breaking down, but the resulting material makes a good, albeit coarse, mulch, which can be had for little or no cost.

Pros: Offers good moisture and temperature control, suppresses weeds well, absorbs water, controls erosion, and comes in different colors. Wood breaks down over time to benefit soil health. It's best used for established beds, around trees and shrubs; it's not a good choice for vegetable gardens or where growing plants from seed.

Cons: Needs regular replenishment and may contain contaminated materials. Aesthetics vary depending on material and grade

Compost. Good-quality organic compost is the healthiest mulch to put on your garden soil. It provides lots of organic matter and nutrients that

soil organisms can pass onto the plants. It is short-lived as a mulching material and needs more frequent replenishment to continue to do a good job of weed suppression, moisture retention and temperature control. Its best use is in a vegetable garden, where the plants will grow quickly and fill in to provide the benefits of a living mulch.

Pros: Feeds plants very well, builds soil quality, suppresses weeds well initially, and offers good moisture and temperature control. It's dark and fine-textured in appearance.

Cons: Is short-lived and needs annual or more frequent application. Although compost shades the soil and slows the germination of existing seeds, it may enhance the germination of new weed seeds that fall on it.

Grass and leaves. Mown grass and chopped leaves are essentially free mulch, which also saves on the cost of disposal. Grass clippings are high in nitrogen and find their best use in the vegetable garden. Before being put back in the garden as mulch, grass should be left to dry in the sun for a couple of days so that the rapidly decomposing material won't burn the tender vegetable plants. Leaves should be shredded to minimize matting and to allow water to move through the layer. Shredded leaves are also easier to spread, look more even and decompose more quickly to benefit the soil.

Pros: Is free, adds nutrients back to the soil, retains moisture well and offers good temperature control.

Cons: Breaks down quickly and needs regular replenishment. Grass and larger leaves may compact and slow water absorbance. Grass may be contaminated with weed seeds, needs to be "cured" to prevent burning and can get smelly if applied too thickly.

Pine needles. Pine needles form an excellent mulch most appropriate to a woodland setting with acid-loving evergreen trees and shrubs. Their high resin content makes them slow to break down, and their needlelike shape resists compaction.

Pros: Is long-lived, offers excellent water permeability and thermal insulation, suppresses weeds well, retains moisture; improves soil quality slowly over time, is economical in areas with a lot of pine trees and has a pleasant scent.

Cons: Comes in only one color and can get slippery when wet, especially on otherwise compacted surfaces.

Mulching Tips

Although mulch offers many benefits, improper use can result in problems.

Don't layer mulch too deep. For most mulches, a 2- to 4-inch-deep layer is recommended. Applying it too thickly limits airflow to the soil and can suffocate plant roots. A layer that is too thick can also get soggy and develop a bad smell due to growth of anaerobic bacteria. Overly thick layers of organic mulch are slower to break down and are more subject to compaction.

Keep mulch away from trunks. One of the most obvious misuses of mulch is the "mulch volcano." This is where mulch is piled up in a cone around the base of a tree. When this occurs, the bark stays wet, and conditions for bark rot can develop. Also, some trees will put out new roots into this cone that circle the tree and strangle it, usually several years down the line. The same holds true for shrubs and perennials, where covering their base can result in crown rot. In general, mulch should be pulled back 2 to 4 inches from the trunk or crown of a tree or shrub.

Vertical Gardening

Paris Wolfe

Vertical gardens have grown in popularity because they're visually pleasing and add real estate to a small footprint. They may be used as a decorative fence or function to hide blight. They're also more accessible for some folks with physical handicaps that limit bending or stooping.

Their modern incarnation is either American or French, depending on the definition. Stanley Hart White—brother of literature's famed E.B. White—was a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Illinois in the 1930s when he created "botanical bricks" in his backyard. These were basically blocks that could be planted and built into a vertical structure.

The concept, perhaps, didn't catch on until 1988, when French botanist Patrick Blanc introduced a dramatic "green wall" at the Museum of Science and Industry in Paris. Now the application is exploding.

“Vertical gardening is here to stay,” says Adlai Kunst, owner of Woolly Pockets in Kansas City, Missouri. “Not only do they create a healthier indoor environment, they look beautiful and can add an element of style to any room or outdoor space. Vertical gardens are a great way to add greenery to unexpected places and are useful when floor or yard space is limited.”

The timing is right for Adlai’s Woolly Pockets and many others to hit garden centers and retailers. “As many people downsize their homes and apartments, or embrace urban gardening, they are looking for creative ways to bring the outdoors in and create a natural environment,” Adlai says. “A vertical garden is the perfect space-saving solution.”

Knowing the needs of these gardens makes it easier to help shoppers collect the right resources.

Contain It

The container depends upon the grower’s vision. They may need lumber and hardware, mason jars and clamps or simply ready-made planters.

Several companies offer shadowboxes that look like picture frames. Pride Garden Products makes them with finishes of copper, black zinc, wood and gray wash. BrightGreen’s GroVert does much the same while providing an online tool to create a virtual garden and visualize the real thing. Recently seen at AmericasMart in Atlanta, Think Outside, a company created by an Australian artist, showed an outdoor vertical garden made from recycled oil drums.

Some ready-to-wear frames come with a fiber or fabric liner designed to retain dirt. For others, shoppers will need to add landscaping material to their shopping cart. Plastic and plastic-fabric holders like Woolly Pockets are another option.

For those looking to grow vegetables in a small space—even indoors—Opcom’s GrowFrame is a soil-free alternative. It’s packaged with sponges, nutrients, lighting—everything needed to grow up to 33 plants.

Getting the Right Mix

Save customer energy by recommending a soil mix that holds moisture. “Any time you raise soil off the ground, you have to consider soil type and volume,” Karen notes. “Some people use soil with moisture-absorbing additives that stay moist. Even with all of that, the vertical garden will need more watering

than something in the ground. The smaller the pocket the plant sits in, the more often it will need to be watered.”

The Plants

Vertical gardens look best with a variety of colors and textures. Color can be as simple as different color foliage or variegation.

“Succulents do extremely well,” says Deborah Oesterling, vice president of sales at Pride Garden Products. “Herbs do well. Anything that’s low growing. You wouldn’t put an aggressive petunia in them. The objective is the look. If the plant gets overgrown, you won’t see the frame.”

She also recommends annuals, such as bedding begonias and impatiens. Or low-growing herbs that are regularly harvested, such as thyme, oregano, bush basil and sprawling rosemary.

Those recommendations are, of course, when the container is part of the scene. Sometimes, containers aren’t a focal point and aggressive plants may be the goal.

Adlai encourages talking to customers before suggesting plants. “The type of plant depends on the space and the climate. Every environment is different, so pairing plants with the light and water available is very important,” he says. “Once you know where the vertical wall will go, you can talk about what plants are right.”

While different displays take different plants, for pockets, Woolly Pockets recommends developing a lush mix from the start. These include:

- Spillers—Draping, creeping ivy
- Thrillers—Statement plants like orchids
- Fillers—Fill in spaces and help cover the planter

Day Happy Father’s

A man’s children and his garden both reflect the amount of weeding done during growing season.



