

GROWING PAINS



Newsletter for the MiraCosta Horticulture Club of Oceanside

May2018

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Announcements

- The plant sale is May 18-20. If you have not signed up yet, please do. We especially need help with going to the nurseries to pick up donations.
- The next meeting is in June and 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.

President's message for May 2018 newsletter

By Tandy Pfost

We have discussed the plant sale at our meetings. There are things to do from May 14 to May 21. Our success hinges largely on how many plants we get, and last year we did not have the resources to get to every donor on the list. Your help picking up at just one nursery can help.

Recently, we also highlighted the importance of all the independent growers and nurseries in the north county area. I thought it might be interesting to highlight a few of them.

Olive Hill Greenhouses has been in Fallbrook since 1973. They specialize in Bromeliads, Anthuriums and tropical foliage. I toured the facility once, and it was quite an operation. They also donate big time

to San Diego Botanic Garden. The business was started by Tony and Sue Godfrey as a part time venture and a 3,000 sq ft green house. It is now a second generation business and has grown into one of the largest interior plant suppliers in California.

Foothill Tropicals in San Marcos was started in 1988 by immigrants, Andy Van Die from the Netherlands and Jose Gonzales from Mexico. They grow premium indoor plants in 4"-10" pots and, outside they grow Queen Palms, Birds and various annuals and perennials. They specialize in Cordylines. They also ship outside the US.

Western Cactus in Vista has been supplying the wholesale market with cactus and succulents for 50 years. They focus on mass-market items in 2"-24" pots as well as specialty items that include dish gardens and other novelty products.

Sunlet Nursery is in Fallbrook. I got to visit it on a SD Farm Bureau tour a few years ago. The owners John and Janet Kister were there handing out small plants. They started their business in 1985. It has grown from five acres to 26 acres of indoor and outdoor growing space. They produce specialty flowering and foliage plants that are supplied to independent garden centers, supermarkets, wholesale florists and amusement parks throughout the country. Their business is a recipient of Greenhouse Grower's Excellence in Community Outreach award and one of three finalists for 2016 Operation of the Year. Janet is involved with the SD Farm Bureau, was appointed to serve on a nursery

advisory board and is treasurer on the Board of Trustees of a scholarship foundation. She is using her entomology background on a taskforce to solve problems with light brown apple moth.

Acosta Plants in Vista grows potted succulents for retail. Cal Pacific Orchid Farm is family owned and in a little neighborhood in Encinitas. They create orchid arrangements for the local market. I love Pearson's in Vista. Everyone should visit there. The Pinery in Escondido started out growing living Christmas trees 30 years ago and is family owned. They now produce fresh and fragrant living trees as a wholesaler for spring and holiday merchandising needs on 100 acres with customers around the country.

Lamb's Ears: Plant Care and Varieties

Grangettos.com

Stachys byzantina: a hardy perennial most known for its thick woolly leaves, not its flowers.

About lamb's ears

Lamb's Ears is a very hardy and strong-growing perennial, with thick white-woolly foliage, valued as a dense, low growing, spreading bedding plant in the landscape. Lamb's Ears works well when filling an area of your landscape and as a border perennial, with pink-purple flower spikes during the summer season. The foliage provides striking silvery color and unique velvety soft textural qualities.

Special features of lamb's ears

[Stachys byzantina 'Helen von Stein'](#), also known as 'Big Ears' has attractive and fragrant foliage and rarely sends up flower spikes.

[Stachys byzantina 'Silver Carpet'](#) is most known for its strikingly attractive silvery-green leaves, but rarely blooms.

Choosing a site to grow lamb's ears

The plant grows best in full sun and well-drained soil and can tolerate poor-soil conditions. *Stachys byzantina* is best grown in zones 4-7.

Planting Instructions

Plant in spring, spacing plants 1 to 3 feet apart, depending on the variety. Prepare the garden bed by using a garden fork or tiller to loosen the soil to a depth of 12 to 15 inches, then mix in a 2- to 4-inch layer of compost. Dig a hole twice the diameter of the pot the plant is in. Carefully remove the plant from its container and place it in the hole so the top

of the root ball is level with the soil surface.

Carefully fill in around the root ball and firm the soil gently. Water thoroughly.

Ongoing Care

Too much standing water captured within the leaves can result in leaf rot. Avoid this condition by dividing established dense growth. Divide plants every 3 to 4 years as new growth begins in the spring, lifting plants and dividing them into clumps. Cut back flowering stems close to ground level after they have finished blooming and they will sprout healthy new stems and leaves. An annual shearing renews the plant, removes all the dead leaves, and makes this plant grow neat and compact. Apply a thin layer of compost each spring, followed by a 2-inch layer of mulch to retain moisture and control weeds



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Foxgloves: Plant Care and Varieties

grangettos.com

Foxglove bears tall, dramatic spikes of tubular flowers with speckled throats. Foxglove blooms in midsummer and adds elegance to a perennial border, woodland area, or shade garden.

About foxgloves

Foxglove's low-growing foliage is topped by 2- to 5-foot-tall flower spikes, depending on the variety. Flower colors include pink, red, purple, white, and yellow. Foxgloves are biennials or short-lived perennials. However, although individual plants may be short-lived, foxglove readily self-sows and multiplies. Foxglove leaves contain digitalis, a potent heart medicine, and are considered poisonous.

Special features of foxgloves

Easy care/low maintenance

Multiplies readily

Good for cut flowers

Deer resistant

Ongoing Care

Apply a thin layer of compost each spring, followed by a 2-inch layer of mulch to retain moisture and control weeds. Water plants during the summer if rainfall is less than 1 inch per week. Stake tall varieties to keep them upright. Remove the central flower spike after flowering to encourage other side shoots to form and produce more flowers.

However, if you want the plant to self-sow and multiply, leave the flower spike intact on the plant so seeds can mature and disperse.

Choosing a site to grow foxgloves

Select a site with full sun to light shade and moist yet well-drained soil.

Planting Instructions

Set plants out in spring or fall, spacing plants 1 to 2 feet apart, depending on the variety; sow seeds in early summer. Prepare the garden bed by using a garden fork or tiller to loosen the soil to a depth of 12 to 15 inches, then mix in a 2- to 4-inch layer of compost. Dig a hole twice the diameter of the pot the plant is in. Carefully remove the plant from its container and place it in the hole so the top of the root ball is level with the soil surface. Carefully fill in around the root ball and firm the soil gently. Water thoroughly.



Gladiolus: Plant Care and Varieties

granettos.com

A classic cut flower, gladiolus produces tall flower spikes adorned with large, showy flowers. Often relegated to the cutting garden, gladiolus also suits the back of the border where the tall flowers can complement bushier plants.

About gladiolus

Gladiolus are available with flowers in a huge range of colors, including apricot, blue, burgundy, pink, gold, red, orange, and white, as well as

multicolored varieties. The plants bloom in midsummer; however, you can prolong the bloom period by choosing early, mid, and late season types and staggering planting times. Height ranges from 2 to 6 feet.

Special features of gladiolus

Good for cut flowers

Choosing a site to grow gladiolus

Select a site with full sun and well-drained soil that is sheltered from strong winds.

Planting Instructions

Plant gladiolus corms in spring after all danger of frost has passed and the soil has warmed. Prepare the garden bed by using a garden fork or tiller to loosen the soil to a depth of 12 to 15 inches, then mix in a 2- to 4-inch layer of compost. Dig a hole about 4 inches deep and set the corm in the hole with the pointed end facing up, cover it with soil, and press firmly. Space corms about 4 to 6 inches apart and water thoroughly. Stake tall varieties at planting time, being careful not to damage corms when installing stakes.

Ongoing Care

Apply a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch around gladiolus to retain moisture and control weeds. Water plants during the summer if rainfall is less than 1 inch per week. Remove individual flowers as they fade, and cut back flower stalks once all flowers have gone by. Leave foliage intact to mature and rejuvenate the corm for next year. In zones 7 and 8, mulch beds with a layer of hay or straw for winter protection. In zones 7 and colder, corms should be dug before the first frost. Remove excess soil, cut the stalks to within an inch of the corms, and let them cure for 1 to 2 weeks in a warm, airy location. Then remove and discard the oldest bottom corms and store the large, new corms in plastic mesh bags in a well-ventilated, 35- to 45-degree F room. Replant in spring.



Poppies: Plant Care and Varieties

grangettos.com

Sporting huge, cup-shaped blooms in early summer, the Oriental poppy is the most striking of the perennial poppies, and the delicate, papery flowers belie the plant's hardiness and durability.

About poppies

A favorite subject for artists, Oriental poppy flowers are the focal point in the garden when they are in full bloom in late spring to early summer. The plant's huge flowers may be up to 6 inches across on stems up to 4 feet tall. Colors include red, salmon, orange, crimson, and white. Oriental poppies perform poorly in regions with hot summers, and the flowers may need staking to keep from flopping over when in full bloom. The plants go dormant after blooming.

Special features of poppies

Easy care/low maintenance

Deer resistant

Planting Instructions

Plant in spring, spacing plants 2 to 3 feet apart, depending on the variety. Prepare the garden bed by using a garden fork or tiller to loosen the soil to a depth of 12 to 15 inches, then mix in a 2- to 4-inch layer of compost. Dig a hole twice the diameter of the pot the plant is in. Carefully remove the plant from its container and place it in the hole so the top of the root ball is level with the soil surface.

Carefully fill in around the root ball and firm the soil gently. Water thoroughly.

Ongoing Care

Apply a thin layer of compost each spring, followed by a 2-inch layer of mulch to retain moisture and control weeds. During the summer months, when plants are dormant, watering is needed only during periods of drought. In autumn, poppies will resume foliage growth until frost, and these green leaves will remain over winter. After soil has frozen, apply a 4- to 6-inch layer of protective mulch to prevent heaving during periods of temperature fluctuation. When the weather warms up in spring, gradually remove the winter mulch. Plants can be divided in early spring or summer.



Growing Zinnias

grangettos.com

Zinnias are one of the easiest plants to grow, as they grow quickly and bloom heavily. Zinnia flowers make a massive burst of color in your garden, and they attract butterflies.

Zinnias are annuals, so they grow for one season and make great cutting flowers, but do not come back in subsequent years. They have bright, solitary, daisy-like flowerheads on a single, erect stem. The most common zinnia is "dahlia-flowered" and grows up to three feet tall. Other types are "cactus-flowered."

Use in an annual or mixed border garden. Smaller zinnias are suitable for edging, window boxes, or other containers. The narrow-leaf zinnia also works well in hanging baskets.

Care

- Deadhead zinnia flowers to prolong flowering.
- Maintain moderate soil moisture and fertilize lightly.
- Zinnias are annuals and will die with the first frost.

