GROWING PAINS

Newsletter for the

MiraCosta Horticulture Club of Oceanside

NOVEMBER 2019

Meeting: 11-9-2019 Saturday Alta Vista Botanical Gardens, Brengle Park, VISTA, CA

Announcements

11 am to 3 pm **Saturday, 11-9-2019**
11:00 Doors open Coffee and cookies
11:15 Please arrive for workshop
11:30 Workshop with Kim Cyr and Susan Duey
Holiday Jewelry Crafts to make with Kim and
Gift plants to pot and wrap using bows and imagination with Susan
12:30 Call to Order Announcements and Member Plant Drawing
12:50 Guest Speaker **"Butterflies of San Diego"**
Pat Flanagan, Butterfly Farms.
2:00 Raffle
2:45 Cleanup

President's Report

On Monday Oct 14, 2019, I attended the Fall Meeting of the Palomar District of California Garden Clubs Inc. in San Diego Balboa Park as your MCH Club representative. Palomar District consists of 25 clubs in San Diego and it was a great opportunity to meet other members, share ideas, and gain knowledge on mutual interests and concerns.

The meeting was very well organized and the reports from the officers were informative. I enjoyed the guest speaker, Kurt Peacock, agriculture scientist and certified arborist, who spoke on "Horticulture Myths". He named 10 garden myths then suggested common sense and often inexpensive products to fertilize and feed your plants. I have some garden concerns, and his presentation sent me to the internet for additional research,

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Right now, one of my concerns is symptoms of magnesium deficiency for my hibiscus plants; the bush attracts many hummingbirds and I enjoy watching them.

Here is some information I gathered: For many gardeners, magnesium deficiency can be cured quickly, inexpensively, and easily with epsom salts from the grocery store or drug store. The author of the article stated that he had bought "horticultural grade" epsom salts and compared them to grocery store epsom salts, and can find no difference in the results. Epsom salts are very water-soluble and can be watered into pots or the ground to supply the extra magnesium that your hibiscus need from time to time.

TO USE IN THE SOIL:

- First water with plain water to moisten soil.
- Sprinkle magnesium on top of the soil under the plant
- Water lightly to wet magnesium
    - Use 1 teaspoon of magnesium for a plant in a 4" pot.
    - Use 2 teaspoons of magnesium for a plant in a 6" pot.
    - Use 1 Tablespoons of magnesium for a plant in an 8" pot.

- Use 2 Tablespoons of magnesium for a plant in a 2-gallon pot.
- Use 1/4 cup of magnesium for large plants in the ground.

Epsom salts work well for hibiscus planted in the ground in areas with neutral or acidic soil, or for plants in pots where the water drains out the bottom and isn't constantly taken back up into the pot.

Magnesium deficiency shows up in yellow leaves, or *chlorosis*, like so many other hibiscus ailments! But with magnesium deficiency, the oldest leaves turn yellow between the veins. Look down low on your plants for leaves that have dark green veins with yellow or yellow and brown between the veins, sometimes with brown edges. The plant tries to send all the magnesium it has up to the tips to the new growth, so the chlorophyll in the lower leaves is broken down and disappears, leaving the strange green-veined yellow look that is the tell-tale sign of magnesium deficiency.

Symptoms of magnesium deficiency. Young upper Leaves are green and health. Older lower Leaves are yellow with dark green veins.

I would be interested in any member who has additional gardening advice regarding hibiscus.
Ed Lopez, President 760-295-5917

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

October 19, 2019 speaker Tom Stephens: All about Owls:

Barn owls are an owners best defense against rodent infestation. A barn owl's diets consists mainly of small rodents such as voles, mice and rats. Installing barn owl boxes around your home, farm, vineyard, garden or homestead is the perfect natural rodent control method.
Introducing predators to your backyard and surroundings is a far superior form of rodent control opposed to conventional methods such as trapping and the use of poisons. Rodents learn to avoid traps and poisons compromises the quality of eco-systems and the population of desirable animals.

A single pair of barn owls can consume up to 2000 rodents a year. When feeding babies that number drastically increases. A pair with 6 babies can consume 1000 rodent in the offspring's first 3 months of nesting.

Barn Owls are nocturnal raptors and kill their prey with strong grasping talons. With their remarkable hearing and excellent low-light vision, they can accurately strike and capture prey at night in total darkness. They have a large 40-inch wingspan, and fly slowly and silently while hunting. Owls swallow their prey whole, in one piece. Later they regurgitate the left-overs in a "pellet" of fur, bones and teeth. These pellets are found under their nests and where they roost. The Barn Owl makes a loud scree-eech sound; a raspy hiss; or a series of clicks. The Great Horned Owl makes the more familiar "who hoo-ing" sound and is a predator of Barn Owls.

Barn owls are generally monogamous and pairs often stay together for as long as both are alive. In San Diego County, barn owns often lay eggs and raise their young between February and July. Female barn owls lay an egg every other day, with clutch sizes usually ranging from 4 to 6 eggs. The female incubates the eggs for a month while the male feeds her. Right after hatching, the mother tears up pieces of food with her beak to feed the chicks. She will stay with the young owls until the youngest is about 12 days old and has a good coat of down. Once the owlets are able to swallow their food whole, then both parents bring rodent after rodent to them all night long for 2 to 3 months. At about 8 weeks, the owlets start flight practice for 2 to 3 weeks before fledging, when the nest is abandoned. Barn owls are fun to observe, and lights don't seem to bother them much.

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO EILEEN FORD, FOR THE OCTOBER WORKSHOP:

A very special thank you to Eileen Ford for the workshop on decorating the beautiful small pumpkins. Everyone enjoyed the workshop and had a great time creating the wonderful gift to take home Thank you again Eileen.

November 9, 2019 Workshop Seminar: Starts at 11:30 am to 12:25 pm

Kim Cyr and Susan Duey will present a workshop on Holiday gifts for self and friends.
There will be plants to repot, wrap, tie in bows, and other festive ideas to get ready for the holidays.
Please bring in any unwanted themed Xmas pots or planters to regift, it will be fun to see what we can do with them.
Kim has a wonderful workshop planned where you can create a stunning necklace that you can keep or give as a present.

November 9, 2019 Guest speaker:
Program: "Butterflies of San Diego" Pat Flanagan, Butterfly Farms.

Pat Flanagan states he established Butterfly Farms in 2013 because of his concern with the decline of native butterflies and other native pollinators. Butterfly Farms is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID: 46-4000153 dedicated to education, conservation and research of our important pollinators. We study the host and nectar plant relationships of pollinators using the Monarch Butterfly as our model. We previously were located on 5 acres at 3012 Oleander Ave Vista CA 92081 and are bordered by the city of Vista and the city of San Marco. However about four years ago we moved from the San Marcos/Vista location to 441 Saxony Rd., Encinitas, CA 92024. In 2010 we started the Luca Micaela Nursery and started growing many varieties of milkweed from seed. Everything grown is pesticide free. We received USDA approval in 2013 to ship milkweed to all western United States. In 2013 we established a working relationship with Monarch Watch and now grow and ship to schools and institutions in California for them. We also now work with the San Diego Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County and in 2014 we worked with them to deliver 2500 native milkweed plants to schools throughout San Diego County. We are completely self-funded and use 100% of proceeds of sales through the Luca Micaela Nursery to fund our efforts at Butterfly Farms.
San Diego Pollinator Alliance: We created a group of organizations and agencies working to add native plant pollinator gardens to high profile venues to help educate the public about the importance of native plants and how anyone can help pollinators at their own home. We also created a group of organizations and agencies working to add native plant pollinator gardens to high profile venues to help educate the public about the importance of native plants and how anyone can help pollinators at their own home.

December 14, 2019 meeting:
Holiday Potluck and Chinese Raffle. More in December newsletter.

Alcohol Ink Washer Necklaces

by Kim Cyr

Part of our workshop will be making alcohol ink washer necklaces. Sounds weird but it's pretty simple. You take a metal washer from the hardware store and color it with alcohol ink. Then you wrap wire and string beads around the washer, add a rope and you have a beautiful necklace! You should have time to make a few different necklaces during the workshop. Bring your creativity!

"When the trees their summer splendor
Change to raiment red and gold,
When the summer moon turns mellow,
And the nights are getting cold;
When the squirrels hide their acorns,
And the woodchucks disappear;
Then we know that it is autumn,
Loveliest season of the year."
- Carol L. Riser, Autumn

Fascinating Facts About Butterflies

by Debbie Hadley

Butterfly wings are transparent
A butterfly's wings are covered by thousands of tiny scales, and these scales reflect light in different colors. But underneath all of those scales, a butterfly wing is actually formed by layers of chitin, the same protein that makes up an insect's exoskeleton. These layers are so thin you can see right through them. As a butterfly ages, scales fall off the wings, leaving spots of transparency where the chitin layer is exposed.

Butterflies taste with their feet
Butterflies have taste receptors on their feet to help them find their host plants and locate food. A female butterfly lands on different plants, drumming the leaves with her feet until the plant releases its juices. Spines on the back of her legs have chemoreceptors that detect the right match of plant chemicals. When she identified the right plant, she lays her eggs. A butterfly will also step on its food, using organs that sense dissolved sugars to taste food sources like fermenting fruit.

Butterflies live on an all-liquid diet
Adult butterflies can only feed on liquids, usually nectar. Their mouthparts are modified to enable them to drink, but they can't chew solids. A proboscis, which functions as a drinking straw, stays curled up under the butterfly's chin until it finds a source of nectar or other liquid nutrition. It then unfurls the long, tubular structure and sips up a meal.

A butterfly must assemble its proboscis as soon as it emerges from the chrysalis
When a new adult emerges from the pupal case or chrysalis, its mouth is in two pieces. Using palpi located adjacent to the proboscis, the butterfly begins working the two parts together to form a single, tubular proboscis. You may see a newly emerged butterfly curling and uncurling the proboscis over and over, testing it out.

Butterflies drink from mud puddles
A butterfly cannot live on sugar alone; it needs minerals, too. To supplement its diet of nectar, a butterfly will occasionally sip from mud puddles, which are rich in minerals and salts. This behavior, called *puddling*, occurs more often in male butterflies, which incorporate the minerals into their sperm. These nutrients are then transferred to the female during mating, and help improve the viability of her eggs.

Butterflies can't fly if they're cold
Butterflies need an ideal body temperature of about 85ºF to fly. Since they're cold-blooded animals, they can't regulate their own body temperatures. If the air temperature falls below 55ºF, butterflies are rendered immobile, unable to flee from predators or feed. When air temperatures range between 82º-100ºF, butterflies can fly with ease. Cooler days require a butterfly to warm up its flight muscles, either by shivering or basking in the sun.

A newly emerged butterfly can't fly
Inside the chrysalis, a developing butterfly waits to emerge with its wings collapsed around its body. When it finally breaks free of the pupal case, it greets the world with tiny, shriveled wings. The butterfly must immediately pump body fluid through its wing veins to expand them. Once its wings reach full-size, the butterfly must rest for a few hours to allow its body to dry and harden before it can take its first flight.

Butterflies employ all kinds of tricks to keep from being eaten
Butterflies rank pretty low on the food chain, with lots of hungry predators happy to make a meal of them. Some butterflies fold their wings to blend into the background, using camouflage to render themselves all but invisible to predators. Others try the opposite strategy, wearing vibrant colors and patterns that boldly announce their presence. Bright colored insects often pack a toxic punch if eaten, so predators learn to avoid them. Some butterflies aren't toxic at all, but pattern themselves after other species known for their toxicity. By mimicking their foul-tasting cousins, they repel predators.

Butterflies see things differently
Butterflies can see red, green, and yellow, but they also see color in the ultraviolet range, which reveals patterns on flowers-and other butterflies-that we can't see. A butterfly can see approximately 314 degrees around itself. This helps them identify potential predators and food or water sources.