



# Home Gardener's NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2007  
Vol. 25 No. 2

PRSR STD  
US Postage  
PAID  
PERMIT NO 496  
Berkeley, CA

(858) 748-2254

12237 Oak Knoll Rd.  
Poway, CA 92064

Visit our website: [www.powaynursery.com](http://www.powaynursery.com)



## March Success Tips

- 1. Begin planting to beautify your yard!** You must come in and see everything, especially the new varieties that come in weekly in limited numbers, and sell out quickly.
- 2. Choose roses** for planting now, and fall in love again with the "queen of flowers"!
- 3. Keep ahead of weeds.** We have a variety of weed killers, preemergents and mulches that make gardening much easiere.
- 4. Plant vegetables**—you can start with lettuce and other cool season vegetables that love our cool weather, and then plant tomatoes and warm season vegetables as the soil warms up.
- 5. The new 2007 Sunset Western Garden book** has arrived! This book is a 'must have' for dedicated and part-time gardeners alike.



## Dainty Dianthus

Get your garden ready for the spring spectacular! If you have a sunny area (or light shade), plant some flowers in the Dianthus family, including carnations, sweet Williams, low-growing pinks, and more.

Dainty Dianthus flowers come in crimson, scarlet, pink, white, and various combinations of these colors. Many have an enticing spicy fragrance, making them perfect border plants. The longer-stemmed varieties (like sweet Williams) make excellent long lasting cut flowers.

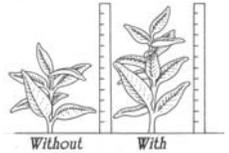
Pinks are especially valuable in the garden because of their long blooming season, plus by trimming the plants back after they've flowered, you can enjoy a strong second flush of blooms later in the summer and fall.

Great companion plants for Dianthus include lobelia, campanula, penstemon, yarrow, and the traditional partner, English lavender.

Groundcovers • Herbs • Trees • Shrubs and MORE!

## Plants—Time to Feed Them!

How's that New Year's diet working for you? Do you feel a little tired when you haven't eaten enough? Don't let your plants feel that way! They need proper feeding to grow strong and healthy, and March is a critical time to feed them. Roots actually begin actively growing even before plants leaf out, and they need a good supply of nutrients readily available to them. Come in and let us help you select some of the newer (organic) fertilizers we now carry. Here's a guide:



- Lawns: *Best Turf Supreme*
- Citrus & Fruit Trees: *Gro-Power* or *Greenhouse*
- Camellias, azaleas, gardenias: *Kellogg's Camellia & Azalea Food*
- Most other plants: *Gro-Power Plus*



## Care for Frost-damaged Plants

January's unusually low temperatures may have taken a toll on some plants in your garden. Frost causes ice crystals to form in plant cells, preventing the plant from absorbing moisture. Frost-damaged leaves wither and turn dark brown or black.

It may be tempting to immediately cut out all the damaged foliage, but pruning then may force new growth, stressing the plant and leaving it vulnerable to another cold spell. Also, the full extent of the damage won't be known for several months, and early pruning may remove branches that will eventually recover. So wait until you see new growth, then cut out everything that is weak or dead.

Until the damaged plants have regrown normal foliage, water only if they are dry, because overwatering may encourage the growth of root rot. Plus, it will probably stimulate excessive undesirable growth and/or suckers.

## Strawberry Shortcake Anyone?

Plant strawberries now and enjoy giant, juicy-sweet red berries this summer! Here are some important strawberry planting tips.

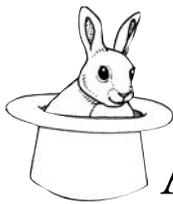


Choose a place with good drainage and thoroughly mix in our soil amendment and starter fertilizer. Planting depth is very important. The soil level should be at the middle of the crown, with the tops of the roots just barely covered.

Keep the bed free of weeds by spreading 2-3 inches of mulch under and around the plants. This also helps conserve moisture and prevents fruit from touching the soil. Prevent overcrowding, which is one cause of small fruits, by thinning out the runners as needed. If space is limited, plant strawberries in containers—they even do well in hanging baskets!

# It's Spring!

Plant Annuals • Perennials • Vegetables



## Abracadabra! Small Yard Magic

As land in California becomes more valuable, residential lot sizes become smaller. Here are three inventive ideas you can use to create the illusion of a larger garden in a smaller area.

**Curiosity.** Don't reveal the entire garden at the entrance. Entice visitors by planting some taller perennials or shrubs that provide just a peek at what lies ahead. Also use fragrant plants to lure guests into the area.

**Focal Point.** Place the focal point as far away from the entrance as possible, then create a path leading to it. (Tip: A path need only be two feet wide if it winds through your private backyard, but if you need to accommodate a lawn mower, make it three feet wide. The entryway path leading to your front door should be about five feet wide.) Line paths with flowers. This creates an arrow effect that points the way to the focal object.

**Single color.** Limit plants to one color, but use many shades of that color to create a feeling of variety without overwhelming the eye. Cool colors (like blue) appear to be farther away, while vibrant ones (like red) seem to jump out at you.

## TRIVIA

**R** ◆ Anyone who has ever grown bamboo knows what a fast grower it is! Bamboo has become one of the world's most popular building materials, known for its strength and beauty. Development of a process that makes bamboo into a rayon-like fiber has produced an extremely soft-textured material that has just entered the marketplace.

**V** ◆ Sweet alyssum (the tiny white flowers that grow even in the sidewalk cracks) is a "hyperaccumulator", meaning the plant gathers nickel from soils containing an overabundance of the metal. In recent research, an extract of the alyssum was sprayed on diseased pecan trees. The substance corrected the nickel deficiency, the cause of the disease.

**I** ◆ University tests on packets of mixed seeds that are known to attract beneficial insects found that cockscomb (*Celosia cristata*) attracted the greatest number of beneficials. Surprisingly, fennel flowers, which has often been recommended as a potent attractor of beneficial insects, attracted the fewest beneficials.

## Beware of Tomato Stalkers!

Tomatoes, the most-planted home garden vegetables in the U.S. may be in danger—a stalker is on the loose!

The obsessive stalker searches for tomato plants, then wraps itself around the plants, caressing them relentlessly. The stalker is a parasitic plant, *Cuscuta pentagona* (dodder), that seeks out the tomato (and several other plants including impatiens) by sensing their odor.

In Penn State University research, the dodder plants ignored water sources and grew toward tomato scents. They even grew in the direction of the tomatoes through curved tubes.

(Don't worry—dodder isn't a problem to our happy California tomatoes!)



## Asparagus & Carrots with Pecans



1 cup water + 3 Tbsp, separated  
1 lb fresh asparagus, trimmed  
2 cups carrots, sliced diagonally  
1/4 cup butter

1 Tbsp lemon juice  
1 tsp cornstarch  
1 tsp grated lemon peel  
3 Tbsp pecan halves or slivered almonds

In a 10" skillet, boil 1 cup water; add asparagus and carrots. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, 8-10 minutes, or until vegetables are crispy tender. Drain and remove from skillet to serving dish; keep warm. In same skillet, melt butter. In a small bowl; mix 3 Tbsp water, lemon juice and cornstarch. Mix with butter. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened. Stir in lemon peel, then pour over vegetables. Sprinkle with nuts, then enjoy this healthy, colorful side dish!

## Grow Attractive Vegetables

During World War II, the "Victory Gardens" of 20 million homeowners produced nearly 40% of the fresh vegetables consumed in the U.S. In the following decades, the number of backyard vegetable gardens declined for several reasons.



Supermarkets, offering picture-perfect produce, replaced the corner market, and faster transportation methods brought fresh fruits and vegetables to market quicker. Also, people began spending more time at work and vacationing and less time at home.

Now the pendulum is swinging back the other way as flavorless supermarket produce has more pesticide residue, and reports of food-borne illnesses and contamination appear regularly in the news. Plus, consumers are being educated on the health benefits and superior flavor of fresh home-grown foods.

Vegetables can be grown in places other than long rows in the backyard. Many have attractive foliage and can be incorporated into **planting beds** for added greenery. (Leaf crops like Swiss chard and lettuce, plus herbs like cilantro and parsley, can survive with less sun than most vegetables.) Use large **decorative pots** on patios to grow bush varieties of green beans, cucumbers, and squash. Centuries ago in Europe, green peppers were grown as attractive shrubs before they became recognized as culinary plants.

Vining vegetables such as beans, melons, and cucumbers can be grown on a **trellis** or **arbor**, or along a **fence**. **Window boxes** were made to accommodate herbs.

So start growing vegetables, and know the food you're eating is fresh, safe, and tops in taste!



Chives