

Garden Talk™

San Diego's Garden Resource



WALTER ANDERSEN
NURSERY™

San Diego's Independent Nursery Since 1928™

The Plants Of Love

BY MELANIE POTTER

The nursery used to sell a book entitled, 'Plants of Love' by Christian Ratsch which detailed the history of aphrodisiacs from A to Z, actually *Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow) to *Zingiber officinale* (Ginger) with garlic, opium, and wheat in between. However, try passing any of those off as a valentine on Feb. 14, and you are guaranteed to spend this day of love, sleeping solo on the sofa.



Tuberose



Bleeding Heart / Monrovia

Rather than tout the plants that are said to heighten ardor by simmering, smoking, or sprinkling their potions, let's take a look at what is likely to help you score a home run.

Red Roses

Order early from a florist to avoid being left empty handed, or buy your beloved a rose bush. Look for these red roses: Always and Forever, American Dream, Chrysler Imperial, Darcy Bussell, Drop Dead Red, Firefighter, In the Mood, Ingrid Bergman, Legends, Mr. Lincoln, Oh My, Oklahoma, O.L. Weeks, Olympiad, Papa Meiland, Trumpeter, and Veteran's Honor. Any of these planted now will deliver a bouquet this March or April!

Orchids

I asked our orchid buyer, Emily Drury, which orchids would impress her as a gift on February 14, and her suggestions were: Cymbidiums, with their very showy, tall flower spikes that can be grown outside here and bloom again next year. The classic orchid she recommended is the Phaeleonopsis, or moth orchid, in shades of white, pink, and purple which are all colors of love!

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2014 Plant Trends

BY MELANIE POTTER

What do neon colors, black and white, and mixed annual combos in containers have in common? These are all trends for 2014, as predicted by the folks at HGTV Home and the HGTV Home Plant Collection. It is touted that these trends provide sufficient plant choices to cover every fad and fashionable step a garden guru may take.

Will container gardening ever go out of style? Probably not, and there are different ideas when it comes to capturing thrillers, spillers, and fillers and presenting them in a pretty package. HGTV Home predicts that mixing complementary patterns in design along with mixing plant varieties in containers will continue to be in vogue (duh). Look for color combinations using the bright



Vibrant Color / Proven Winners

colors of Calibrachoa, Geraniums, Petunias, Verbena and Dahlias. Other bright colors can come from Gazania, Ornamental Cabbage, Primrose, and Calendula. Pink, red, orange, and yellow colors deliver high energy, so look for these.

Black and white is a classy combination that adds elegance and a modern flair. Finding

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The "Plants Of The Year" Are...

BY MELANIE POTTER



Echinacea / Proven Winners

Every year the National Garden Bureau selects an annual, perennial, and vegetable as the plants of the year. This year, **Echinacea**, **Petunias**, and **Cucumbers** walked away with the honors.

Echinacea, also called Coneflower, was chosen as the perennial for the National Garden Bureau's 2014 'Year of Program'

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February

Garden Tasks

PRUNING

Prune roses and deciduous fruits and ornamentals before new growth starts. Trim back tropicals like Hibiscus and Bougainvillea after danger of frost passes to clean up any damage received during the winter.

PEST CONTROL

Give last applications of dormant sprays such as Liqui-Cop or Oil Spray before buds start to break on deciduous fruits and ornamentals.

PLANTING

Last of the bare-root Roses, Fruits, and Ornamentals should be planted. Citrus can also be planted now. Protect from frost if needed. Plant another crop of leaf lettuce.

LOOK FOR

Camellias and Azaleas. Cool season vegetables. Bulbs, potatoes, and garlic.

The Plants Of Love *continued from p1*

Bleeding Heart

Recommended by David Ross and well suited for someone who likes the colors and pendulous presentation of fuchsias. A native of Siberia, Japan, Korea, and northern China, Wikipedia spins this tale of the Bleeding Heart's origin. A Japanese legend tells the story of a young man who tried to win the love of a young lady. He did this by bestowing upon her a pair of rabbits (which are the first two petals of the flower), a pair of slippers (which are the next two petals of the flower), and finally a pair of earrings (which are the last two petals of the flower). She rejected his affections, and, devastated, he pierced his heart with his sword (the middle part of the flower) which caused the bleeding heart. Present one of these lovely plants to your significant other and recite the legend and I guarantee you'll find yourself on Facebook 'in a relationship' rather than 'it's complicated'.

And Now For My Favorites

Anything white and smelly, and remember we're talking plants here, and good smells. This year we'll have Pink Jasmine and Stephanotis (sometimes we get them in heart shaped wreaths). Also known as Madagascar Jasmine, Stephanotis is a native of Madagascar and in San Diego, will bloom late spring through summer. If kept indoors, it will need plenty of light to rebloom but does best outdoors when done blooming. Gardenias (look for the grafted varieties which perform better in full sun and our crummy soil) and tuberose are also winners. Tuberose is native to Mexico

and is a modified rhizome. To bloom every year, a long warm growing season of at least four months is required. Growing them in containers is the easiest way to meet their needs. Bulbs are available in limited quantities. Mini carnations, fairy primrose, and Stargazer lilies are also expected.

Richard Wright is in the nursery all the time and he is well known amongst our customers and newsletter readers. I recall his planting philosophy which is basically, "if you can't eat it, why grow it?" He's a strong proponent of planting edibles. So, at this time of love and with Richard in mind, why not plant Strawberries? We've ordered Albion (early season producer with good flavor), Chandler (June-bearing plant producing medium to large, wedge-shaped juicy fruit with exceptional flavor), and Florida Radiance (developed for winter production in Florida. The fruit is firm, conic in shape and medium in size, with bright to dark red skin and orange-red flesh. It has high yields), Quinault Everbearing (a newer everbearing variety that produces berries on unrooted runners. A great tasting strawberry that makes an excellent ground cover or border planting along walks or paths. Produces from June till frost), Seascape (these berries are day-neutral, meaning they do not have an internal clock that is dictated by sunlight), and Sequoia (bearing large, robustly flavored berries in late spring and early summer).

Plant berries together now and in a few months dip in chocolate, together. Follow this advice and I expect to attend a lot of weddings in 2014! ■

2014 Plant Trends *continued from p1*

black, or almost black plants is easy. Look for Mondo Grass, Pansies, Aeonium, Ajuga, Heuchera, Alocasia, Coleus, New Zealand Flax, Cordyline, and Sambucus.

White additions include Bacopa, Helichrysum, Nemesis, Alyssum, Argyanthemum, Impatiens, Cleome, Zinnias, Dipladania, Snapdragons, Kalanchoe, Lobularia, and Pentas.

Neon colors exploded in popularity last year and they haven't worn out their welcome yet. To add neon colored pop to your plantings, look for brilliantly-colored geraniums, Bougainvillea, and Gerber daisies. Use lime green foliage to add a shock value to containers by planting Ipomea, Heuchera, Lysimachia, Dracaena, Alternanthera 'Jacob's Coat' Yellow, and Canna Lily.

If you're having difficulty finding just the right color for your plantings, you can use that hard-to-find color as a container choice. Find a pot



**Black & White / Lime Green Foliage
Proven Winners**

that color or paint something that serves as an unexpected container (check out Pinterest for ideas). Finally, if you need a refresher on how to plant a container, refer to Chuck McClung's article, www.walterandersen.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/News0713_F12.pdf, on page 4. Both stores will have container gardening classes this spring; on 2/8 at 9:30am in our Poway store and on 3/15 at 9am in our San Diego store. ■

Words

From Walter

BY WALTER ANDERSEN, JR.



Cymbidium Orchids Brighten Your Home

Here is a great blooming plant to brighten your home during cool winter months. Cymbidium Orchids start blooming as the weather cools, some as early as November. They come in many colors and shades. The blooms last a long time also. You can bring them indoors when the blooms are pretty much fully open. If you bring them indoors when the buds have not opened fully, those buds may abort, so check carefully to see they are in full bloom. The blooms will last a month or more, if not exposed to a heat source, so try to find a bright area with good



air circulation, away from the heater vents for the longest lasting blooms.

You should water them about once a week; if they are placed in a saucer check to be sure it does not overflow. Drain away excess water so they don't stand in it. You can also place them in a shady area outdoors and give them a good soaking, moving them back after the container drains.

They won't need to be fed until they finish blooming. Feed with Gro-Power planting tablets. ■

"Plants of the Year" *continued from p1*

because of the vast assortment of flower colors and shapes available to today's gardener and because they are such an American staple.

These are available midsummer, typically in colors of white, pink, red, and purple. Grow them in full sun and provide moderate to regular water. These make an excellent cut flower and grow well in containers.

The **Petunia** was chosen for its workhorse reputation. Incredibly versatile plants, they come in an abundance of sensationally bold colors. They are widely adaptable, vigorous, self-reliant, and somewhat pest and disease free. Petunias are low maintenance and drought tolerant, available nation-wide, are a great value, sport a variety of forms and colors, and some even exhibit a light, sweet fragrance.

At our nurseries, you'll find three varieties of Petunias: the regular single flower kind, the ruffled double flowers, and 'Wave' or trailing varieties. You'll want to plant them in rich, well-draining soil. Tobacco Budworm can be a problem. When present, they eat the flowers before they emerge. If you get lots of growth but no flowers, Budworm may be your problem. BT is an excellent control for this.

Cucumbers, native to India, have been grown for more than 3,000 years. They are among the top five most popular garden vegetables. Cucumbers are very adaptable. They have been grown as far away as in space and a mile underground in a nickel mine.

We always have a wide variety of cukes available. Last year, the Persian and Japanese varieties were popular so they will return this year. We'll also have Lemon, Burpless or European, pickling, and slicing varieties. Cucumbers need room to grow so give them a trellis or space to sprawl. Most cucumber plants bear male and female flowers and are cross-pollinated by bees. Plant in a sunny spot, avoid overhead watering to discourage downy mildew, and protect from insects. Remember that much of your fruit and vegetables suffer from uneven irrigation, and cucumbers are no different. Without even watering, they will be bitter.

Chock full of information, the National Garden Bureau was inspired in 1920 but came to age during World War II when the government encouraged homeowners to grow victory gardens. The organization exists to educate, inspire and motivate people to increase their use of plants in homes, gardens and workplaces. ■

You Can Grow Blueberries



BY WALTER ANDERSEN, JR.

Who does not like Blueberries? Especially fresh Blueberries! *Vaccinium corymbosum*, the botanical name, is native to the north-eastern part of the U.S. Growers have found that if you amend and create an acid soil, many do very well in Southern California. Newer hybrids, Southern Highbush varieties, that do well with little winter chill are well suited to our area.

Blueberries also make a nice landscape plant and can be used for informal hedges, individual plantings and even container plants, in pots or tubs. The most important thing you need to have is an area with full sun and well-draining acidic soil. For most plantings we recommend Sunshine brand Planter Mix (in the green bag) or Sunshine brand Azalea – Camellia – Rhododendron Mix. These products are high in Canadian peat moss, which is naturally acidic. You could also use Canadian peat moss mixed about 50 – 50 with Ada Perry's Redwood Compost. Ideally, the soil mix should have a pH of 5 to 5.5. These conditions do not exist naturally in our area. Here's a tip: If you plant two different varieties you will have larger crops from cross pollination.

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Old Ben's Specials!

Sale Prices Valid
February 1–28, 2014

Lowest Prices Of The Season!

20lb. Old Ben's Classic Wild Bird Seed

Includes FREE Bag of Health Grit
A \$1.99 Value

\$15.99 Reg. \$29.99

25lb. Bag of Nyjer Seed

Attracts Goldfinches

\$29.99 Reg. \$44.99

Platform Feeder

The easiest way to feed wild birds

\$29.99 Regular \$42.99

Birdhouse Platform Feeder

\$19.99 Regular \$29.99

Nyjer Mesh Finch Feeder

Won't wear out like finch socks

\$29.99 Reg. \$42.99

Wild Bird Nesting Material

Contains 8 select nesting materials

\$9.99 Reg. \$14.99

*All specials limited to stock on hand.
No special orders. Cannot be combined with
any other discount or offer.*



Celebrate National Bird Feeding Month

BY OLD BEN



For those unaware, February is National Bird Feeding Month. During this month, we are encouraged to provide food, water and shelter for the birds. As many already know, February is one of the toughest months for our wild birds, and that's why this month was chosen.

Late last year and the beginning of this year have been brutally cold, with a number of major storms passing through most parts of the country. Although some birds migrate to warmer temperatures and better climates, there are still a lot of birds that hang around in areas that are hit hard by adverse weather. We (and the birds) are very lucky to live in San Diego County.

Cold winter weather was one of the reasons why Congressman John Porter Illinois read the resolution creating National Bird Feeding Month in 1994. Here's the introduction to the resolution:

"Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize February, one of the most difficult months in the United States for wild birds, as National Bird Feeding Month. During this month, individuals are encouraged to provide food, water and shelter to help wild birds survive. This assistance benefits the environment by supplementing wild bird's natural diet of weed seeds and insects."

Currently, one third of the U.S. adult population feeds wild birds in their backyards.

The second purpose of National Bird Feeding Month is to spread the interest and passion of nature through birds. Anyone who has ever fed birds can tell you that

17TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Counting birds is a fun, free, family-friendly way to discover and help the birds in your community.

Visit birdcount.org to learn more.

February 14–17, 2014



American Robin by 2013 GBBC Participant Gwen Starrett



there is a special bond that's created with birds when you put out food for them. So, if you've been thinking about putting up your own bird feeder or you've lapsed in your bird feeding, let this be an encouragement to fill up your feeders. If you are already regularly feeding birds, make it your goal this month to get someone else interested.

What is the GBBC? The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual, four day (Feb. 14 - Feb. 17) event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real time snapshot of where the birds are.

Everyone is welcome, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event.

It's free, fun and easy, and it helps the birds.

You tally the number of individual birds of each species you see during the count period, and then enter these numbers on the GBBC web site. www.birdcount.org.

So this month, let's all feed and count birds! ■

Home Vineyards

BY KEN ANDERSEN

San Diego has always been known for its tremendous weather, averaging 266 sunny days per year. That is one reason why we are so successful at growing so many fruits and vegetables here, and why sales of edibles have skyrocketed during the last decade. During the same period, we have become known for another thing; Microbreweries. San Diego is home to dozens of microbreweries and many of those establishments offer microbrewery tours! What you may not know is, in addition to a few well known local wineries, more and more individuals are starting to grow their own wine grapes. Back in the 1970s, home wine making was very popular and then for some reason interest seemed to dissipate. We think that it should make a comeback. We have been supplying wine grapes, such as Syrah, Pinot Noir, and Chardonnay, during bare root season for many years now. These grapes can be successfully grown in almost every part of San Diego County. I have even noticed a small hillside vineyard off interstate 8 near the Sunrise Highway!

Each season, approximately 12 mature grape vines will produce about five gallons of juice that can be fermented into wine. When you look at the popularity of micro/home brewing, micro vineyards are another great alternative.

Unlike brewing beer where you need ingredients from crops that are not feasible to produce on your own, i.e. grains and hops, with wine that is not the case. With a small footprint you can control everything you make from vine to bottle. Space the vines about 4-5 feet apart and about 5 feet between rows if more than one row is needed. A wire trellis system is the easiest way to train the vines for the best production. Without a trellis, the vines will be harder to



Himrod grapes harvest / Photo: Ty Webb

manage and may not be as productive. The vines will need tending for a couple of years to get them trained to the trellis system.

If you are not a wine drinker, consider a micro vineyard for table grapes. These varieties can be grown in the same manner and will provide you with wonderful, sweet fruit. David Ross is a big fan of the Concord grapes he is growing and suggests eating the seeds too since they are high in antioxidants. Himrod, Thomcord, and Ruby Seedless are also good choices. One thing to bear in mind with growing grape vines, either for wine or eating is that they will be dormant for part of the year. Keep this in mind when planning where to plant. If it does fit, then a micro vineyard may be something that you consider adding to your yard. ■



Himrod seedless grapes from Walter Andersen Nursery planted in Talmadge / Photo: Ty Webb



Blueberries

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If you plant in a container, try to use a fairly large one, like a 20" square box or octagonal tub, or one of the larger plastic containers at least 15 gallon size, larger is even better. There is a squat 15 that should do very well. Just be sure there is good drainage in whatever container you choose. Place some mix in the bottom of the container to bring the root-ball up nearly even to the top of the container, pack it in lightly, and then give it a good watering.

If you choose to plant in the ground, dig a generous hole, at least two times as wide as the container, approximately 24" wide and about 18" deep. Use the same mix as if you were planting in a container, place some in the bottom to raise the root-ball up off of the native soil. If planted in the ground, space the plants about 4 to 5 feet apart so they don't become crowded and the crops are easier to pick. About the first of March, start fertilizing the blueberries with a good acid type fertilizer. Gro-Power makes an excellent Azalea – Camellia – Rhododendron Food that the blueberries will love. Try to fertilize the first of each month spring through fall.

To be sure your soil stays acidic, you may have to apply Soil Sulfur occasionally; our alkaline water may cause the pH to rise. To keep them greener, you may want to add an iron supplement once or twice per year.

Here's my Blueberry picks:

O'Neal

Often considered having the best flavor of the Southern highbush varieties, large dark blue fruit matures very early from summer to early fall. Needs only 400 hours of chill. Evergreen foliage in mild winters or turns brilliant red before falling in cold climates.

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Blueberries

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Peach Sorbet

A compact blueberry with leaves ranging from peach to pink to orange to emerald green. Spring's white, bell-shaped flowers will give way to an abundant summer crop of healthy, sweet blueberries mid-summer. In most climates, Peach Sorbet keeps its leaves through the winter when the foliage transitions to a rich eggplant purple. Water, a little spring fertilizer, and an annual winter pruning is all it needs to perform. This variety is very suitable for warmer regions.

Sunshine

One of the best low-chill varieties, this selection is perfect for smaller gardens and ideal for large patio tubs. Blue-green foliage and showy pink to white flowers provide ornamental value, followed by an abundant crop of fruit. Self fruitful, but yields best when planted with another variety. ■

Tool Shed

If you've taken advantage of the spring-summer like weather this winter and cleaned out your tool shed, we've got some products you may consider putting on your empty shelves.



E.B. Stone Cactus Mix

Two new soil products from E.B. Stone. We've got Cactus Mix in a 1.5 cu. ft. bag. It's an ideal potting mix for all types of indoor cactus and succulents. Contains fir bark, lava rock, Canadian sphagnum peat moss, sand, redwood compost and mushroom compost. Some use it for Bromeliads and Epidendrums, too.



E.B. Stone Big Harvest Bale

Look for Big Harvest Bale which is a chopped blend of soil building compost that is more like the high grade redwood compost we carried years ago.



Pocket Hose

A great watering solution for small areas. This hose stretches to 50' but takes up hardly any space.



Agri-Fos

This systemic fungicide is already available in our stores, but we've added another option that includes a bark penetrating surfactant. This will treat Fire Blight as a curative, not a preventative. It also treats sudden oak death.



Vega

Vega by Dr. Earth is a totally organic 2-2-2 fertilizer. It is free of animal byproducts. This is an all purpose fertilizer with probiotics and prebiotics. Vega is great for all types of gardens both annual and perennial. ■

See Page 7 for Coupon Savings on E.B. Stone Products

February In-Store Coupons

Coupon Valid February 1–28, 2014

\$1.00 OFF
E.B. Stone
Cactus Mix
1.5 CF
#121252

Limited to stock on hand. Must be redeemed at time of purchase. No special orders. Cannot be combined with any other discount or offer. Hedge Fund\$ points apply. No Limit.

Coupon Valid February 1–28, 2014

\$1.00 OFF
Edna's Best
Potting Soil
1.5 CF
#121253

Limited to stock on hand. Must be redeemed at time of purchase. No special orders. Cannot be combined with any other discount or offer. Hedge Fund\$ points apply. No Limit.

Coupon Valid February 1–28, 2014

\$2.00 OFF
E.B. Stone
Big Harvest Bale
Planting Mix 3 CF
#121254

Limited to stock on hand. Must be redeemed at time of purchase. No special orders. Cannot be combined with any other discount or offer. Hedge Fund\$ points apply. No Limit.

Coupon Valid February 1–28, 2014

\$2.00 OFF
Any House Plant
\$9.99 or more
(Excludes Orchids)
#121255

Limited to stock on hand. Must be redeemed at time of purchase. No special orders. Cannot be combined with any other discount or offer. Hedge Fund\$ points apply. No Limit.

February
In-Store Special!

4" Bedding
Color
\$2.49
Reg. \$2.99

No limits. No other discounts.
HedgeFund\$ points apply.



February Garden Class Schedule

Saturday classes are FREE and last about an hour. Complimentary coffee is served. During inclement weather, classes are held indoors in San Diego and on the covered, heated patio in Poway. Topics are subject to change. See the full schedule at www.walterandersen.com/calendar/.

9:00AM SAN DIEGO NURSERY	9:30AM POWAY NURSERY
2/1 Magnificent Cymbidium Orchids	2/1 Staghorn Ferns, Remounting & Care
2/8 Why Plant Spring Bulbs	2/8 Container Gardening with David Ross
2/15 Citrus & Avocado Culture & Care in San Diego	2/15 Fertilizers with Richard Wright
2/22 Spring Color! Plant Early & Wisely	2/22 Landscaping with Natives with Teresa from Moosa Creek

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