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Garden Talk

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MAY 2018



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Five Steps To A Healthy Garden

By Botanical Interests



Photo: Botanical Interests

Here are five steps to follow as you prepare your garden

1. Right plant in right place.

Don't fight your site, but rather, embrace your sunlight levels, climate, and soil type. Choose varieties that will naturally thrive in your gardens' conditions which reduces the need for excess water or amendment.

2. Compost.

Reduce landfill waste by composting yard scraps and non meat food waste. These organic products will enhance your soil.

3. Water wisely.

Conserve water by watering deeply and less frequently, encouraging plants to build deeper, water-mining roots. You can also improve your soil's ability to hold water by adding organic material.

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One of the benefits of having a garden is controlling how your food is grown. Growing organically ensures your food is free of commercial pesticides and pollutants that seep into the ground or atmosphere.

History Of WAN: Our First Landscaping Job?

By Ken Andersen



Sixth in the series. [Read all the articles starting with the December, 2017 newsletter at \[www.walterandersen.com/news/newsletters\]\(http://www.walterandersen.com/news/newsletters\).](#)

A couple of years ago, I came across a photo album that my grandfather, Walter Sr., had put together. There were a number of random photos in it

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Schedule Some Time To Plant

By Ken Andersen

Have you ever started a landscape project and wondered how long it will take to complete? There are many variables that you may want to plan for and not be in limbo guessing if it's started in the morning will it be done before the heat of the afternoon? If started in the afternoon will it be finished before dark? Here are

[continued p2](#)



Healthy Garden continued from p1

Water in the evening or morning to prevent excessive evaporation. Mulch will insulate and protect soils, further slowing evaporation. Finally, make sure you are watering with just the right amount; under or over-watering can cause plant stress, which acts like an open invitation to pests and disease.

4. Prevention is key to a healthy garden.

Rotate plant families annually so they are not grown in the same space but once every three years, reducing debris build-up and potential for disease. Clean up the garden at the end of the season and avoid composting any disease or pest-infested material. Invite beneficial insects into the garden by planting flowering varieties they are attracted to (like borage, alyssum, and dill). This way, when pests arrive, you already have a hungry, resident army waiting in the "wings". Scout for pests, diseases, and natural predators

weekly so you can identify problems early, and decide if action is needed. If you must spray, do so in the early morning or evening when most bees are less active, and avoid spraying flowers.

5. Sow a cover crop!

A cover crop enriches the soil, fights weeds, and breaks up compacted soil naturally. Cover crops can also be used to create an insectory (a dedicated area that provides habitat for beneficial insects). •



Bright, Unusual, Easy-To-Grow Succulent Comes With A Warning

By Walter Andersen, Jr.

This is an unusual looking plant that you are likely to recognize. It's 'Sticks of Fire' or *Euphorbia tirucalli* (Fire Sticks). 'Milk Bush' and 'Pencil Cactus' are common names associated with the green variety.

The plant is made up of mostly upright columns of stems, from 1/4" diameter to 1" along with larger branches and trunks; there are no leaves. The 'Sticks of Fire' variety is very showy with colors of orange, red and yellow. In time, they can grow to 8' or more in a protected location. Most folks who grow this keep it trimmed up to 5'. This is a great plant for containers or in the ground and it will have its best color if planted in full sun. This is a very good water wise plant, and would make a great addition to any cactus or succulent garden.



Now for the warning: Be careful when working around the plant not to get any of the milky sap on you; that will cause a mild skin irritation. If it gets in your eye, you'll make a trip to the emergency room. Don't plant in areas where children or pets may frequent. •

Time To Plant

continued from p1

some guidelines from the National Landscape Association for the average time it takes to plant items in your garden. Of course these are averages and some estimates may be different based on the type or soil you're planting in. These times include digging the hole, amending soil, and planting the plant.

6 Packs: 18 minutes per pack

Groundcover Flat: 2.5 hours

4" Pots: 3 minutes per plant

1 Gallon: 10 minutes per plant

5 Gallon: 25 minutes per plant

15 Gallon: 90 minutes per plant

24" Box: 6 hours per plant •

Kokedama Class



Create a Moss Ball based on Japanese Traditions

The Poway store will hold a Kokedama class May 26 at 9:30am at its Poway location. At the workshop, attendees will learn about Kokedama, a unique form of living art. It is simply a ball of soil covered by moss then arranging plants that will grow in it.

The class will be taught by Kanako Yamada, owner of Kodama Forest.

The class is limited to 15 people and there is a \$28 materials and instruction fee. Call 858-513-4900 to RSVP and pre-pay for the class. Participants will have access to the supplies (moss, soils, materials, and plants) needed to make a moss ball and are welcome to bring gloves and an apron to wear. •

History of WAN: Landscaping continued from p1



The La Jolla home that was one of the first landscaping jobs by Walter Andersen, Sr.

along with some photos of Rose Court Floral, a business owned by his cousin, Chris Westergard. Walter Sr. worked there when he moved to San Diego from Nebraska.

One set of photos caught my attention and I shared it with Walter Jr. The photographs were of a very nice home with a newly planted landscape. While no information about the home was written in the album or on the photo, we were able to approximate the time period in which the photos were taken was early 1928. That was about the time that Walter Sr. opened the nursery and started landscaping jobs. We believe, although we do not have proof, this home may have been his first landscaping

job. We were unable to determine the location of the home so we sought the help of Bruce Coons. Bruce is the executive director of the Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO). Sure enough, Bruce was able to share the exact location of the home, in the Bird Rock area of La Jolla. As it turns out, the current occupants of the home are customers after almost 90 years! •



TO DO LIST: May

CONSERVE WATER

Mulch under and around plants and open areas with decorative bark to reduce evaporation. **Water** in the early morning or cooler evenings to reduce evaporation. Consider replacing sprinklers with **drip irrigation**. We sell easy-to-use conversion products.

FERTILIZE

For **lawns**, use Marathon Fertilizer for tall fescue, and Hi-Yield Weed & Feed to feed grass and control broadleaf weeds. Feed **ornamentals** with Gro-Power. Feed **vegetables** with Gro-Power Tomato and Vegetable Food or Dr. Earth Organic Tomato and Vegetable Food. Feed **citrus, Avocado**, and **fruit trees** with Gro-Power Citrus and Avocado Food. Feed **palms** and **tropicals** with Gro-Power Palm Tree and Tropical Food.

PEST CONTROL

Watch for **insects** beginning to invade the garden. Pay close attention for **Aphids, Whitefly** and **Scale**. Use systemic controls from Bayer for longest control. Watch for **slug** and **snail** damage and apply Sluggo or Sluggo Plus as needed. Watch for and treat plants attacked by **Citrus Leaf Miner**, use Spinosad or Bayer, or Pheromone attractant.

PLANT

Bedding plants for color such as Marigolds, Zinnias, and Petunias. **Trees, shrubs, fruit trees, tropicals**, and **roses**. Look for Ceanothus, Viburnum, Fuchsias, and Dipladenia. •



Words From Walter

Looking For Something Very Dramatic For A Xeriscape?

By Walter Andersen, Jr.



I think I have the answer. **Puya alpestris!** There's no common name that I know of, but once you see a large plant in bloom, you will never forget it. The very first one I saw was in Mission Hills, near Grant School about 40 years ago. The plant was just amazing!

Puya are in the Bromeliad family of plants. This one is just super tough once established. It can tolerate very poor soil (but good soil would be better). It forms a large clump of rosette-like growths with silvery green leaves, maybe 20" long. These thick clusters have small but sharp thorns on the edge of the leaves. It looks like a cactus and when they bloom, they will knock your socks off! A big bloom spike starts in the older rosettes when mature, usually in spring. They can grow to 5' to 6' tall. The gunmetal blue-turquoise colored blooms are all up and down the spike and are 2" to 3" in diameter. They have bright orange anthers in the

middle of the blooms. The spike is covered in masses of them. It's something you don't see every day, but you won't forget once they bloom for you. Give this plant some space as the clump can get 6' to 10' across when mature. This is a great showpiece for cactus or rock gardens; planted on a hillside would be spectacular. Now for some bad news. You'll have to be patient as it will take a few years to grow large enough to bloom. Unfortunately, our stores can only get them in one gallon size containers. •

Dwarf Jacaranda Packs A Visual Punch

By Melanie Potter

Do you appreciate how spectacular the Jacaranda trees are with their showy, purple blooms? One drawback from planting this beauty is that it's deciduous. Part of the year it is a showpiece in the garden, but during other seasons, it is dormant.

What if I were to tell you that you can now find Bonsai Blue Jacaranda, a true dwarf that is fast growing to 6' tall? Like its big sibling, it creates a show in spring with large, deep purple tubular flowers. It's an ideal small specimen tree for smaller gardens, equally useful as a large border accent or in decor-

ative pots on a terrace or patio. It takes well to pruning (do this in the late winter) and is remarkably tolerant of heat and drought.

Plant in the full sun in enriched, well-drained soil. Follow a regular watering schedule during the first growing season to establish a deep, extensive root system. Watering may be reduced after establishment. Feed with a general purpose fertilizer before new growth begins in spring. •



In Fond Memory Phil Johnson

February 8, 1929 - February 20, 2018



It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of long time former employee Phil Johnson. For 43 years, Phil was a staple at the San Diego store. He was hired by Walter Andersen Sr. in 1969 just prior to the move from Rosecrans to Enterprise Street. Phil was an expert at customer service specializing in orchid care and culture. He was an expert in cymbidium orchid repotting and did that service for the nursery for many years. His all around knowledge of horticulture was outstanding and many customers sought him out for advice and help. Phil is survived by his wife of 63 years Carla, sons Richard and Rodney, and his granddaughters. •





Old Ben: Bumblebee Hummingbirds

By Old Ben



Part one of a two-part article. See part two in June.

The fact that the bumblebee hummingbird is so small definitely gets attention. The fact that it is also the smallest of all birds in the world is another reason people are so interested in it. As you may have guessed from the name, it is only the size of a bumblebee. The entire length is less than two inches. The males are smaller than the females.

Bumblebee hummingbirds have fewer feathers than any other bird. Due to the lack of feathers and small size, it is quite often mistaken for a bee in its natural habitat.

Their wings can move at a rate of 80 to 200 movements per minute. The human eye sees this fast movement and thinks it's an insect.

The bumblebee hummingbird lives in both Cuba and the Isle of Pines. You have to know where to find them as they easily blend into their surroundings. They live in woodlands, in garden areas, and where you find lots of flowering plants.

The coloring of this hummingbird is gorgeous, but you may have to look at blown up photos of this bird in order to fully appreciate it. You can tell the males from the females based on the colors you see. Both of them feature a

breast area that is white, cream, or gray.

The males bright red coloring mixed with the white is something you don't see every day. The females are a mix of blue and green. Seeing either of them can give you a moment to be in awe of what nature has to offer.

In spite of being so small, they have a big appetite. The bumblebee hummingbird will eat about half its body weight every day. They eat insects that are much smaller than they are. Nectar, which is plentiful in their natural environment, is their primary source of food.

They also drink approximately eight times their body weight in water every day. In order to save energy, they lower their body temperature at night. During the day their body temperature is about 104 degrees, which is higher than any other bird species.

If you get a chance to see a bumblebee hummingbird up close, take advantage of it. This is a type of bird that very few people get to see other than on videos and photos. There has been plenty of research done and fortunately, they aren't in jeopardy of becoming extinct. In fact, they seem to steadily increase in numbers all the time. •

Old Ben's Promise

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- I believe wild bird food should be made only with ingredients I am proud to share.
- I believe wild bird food should be simply prepared with as little processing as possible.
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No special orders. Cannot be combined with
any other discount or offer.*



Ask Old Ben!

Ask Old Ben questions about birds, show him your (feathered) bird photos, or share your birding experiences emailing him at:
askoldben@aol.com

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Garden Classes

MAY

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/.

SAN DIEGO | 9:00AM

5/5
Growing Tasty Kitchen Herbs

5/12
Rose Care

5/19
Water Plants & Aquatics

5/26
Plumeria

POWAY | 9:30AM

5/5
Salsa!

5/12
Spring Seeds with Brijette
from San Diego Seed

5/19
Fruit Tree Care
with Richard Wright

5/26
Kokedama Workshop
\$28 materials fee.
Must RSVP to 858-513-4900.

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orchids, indoor plants, garden
necessities, giftware & gift cards, too!

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