

# Garden Talk™

## San Diego's Garden Resource



## 2013: The Year Of These Favorites

BY NATIONAL GARDEN BUREAU, INC.



**Gerberas**

Each year, representatives of the professional horticulture industry select one flower, one vegetable and one perennial to be showcased based on popularity, ease in growing, adaptability, genetic diversity, and versatility. 2013 is the year to celebrate the Gerbera, watermelon, and wildflower.

Gerberas do well outdoors if given the proper care and conditions. Plant in coarse and well-drained media that is slightly acidic pH 5.5 – 6.5. Gerberas require morning sun in warmer southern climates and full sun in cooler northern locations. Do not plant them against a brick wall or near surfaces that reflect intense heat. Water early in the morning to allow rapid drying of foliage which will help prevent powdery mildew. Gerberas are subject to various root rots so allowing the media to dry slightly in between watering aids in keeping the root system healthy.

There are several insects that attack Gerberas including aphids, whiteflies, thrips, spider mites and leaf miners so be vigilant about treating for pest damage. Bayer Insect, Mite & Disease Control will cure all that ails them.

Today's watermelons can be classified as picnic, icebox, seedless and yellow/orange flesh types. Picnic types are the larger melons that can be round, long or oblong and are the largest ranging from 15-50 pounds. Icebox melons are smaller, round types that range from 5-15 pounds. Seedless are mid-sized, oblong or round and range from 10-20 pounds.



**Watermelons**

Watermelons need a long growing season (at least 80 days) and warm ground for seeds to germinate and grow. Soil should be 70 degrees F or warmer at planting time. Sow seeds 1 inch deep and keep well watered until germination. Plant 3 seeds ½ inch deep in 3- or 4-inch peat pots or large cell packs and thin to the best plant. Place in a sunny south-facing window or under lights to germinate. Make sure the area is warm both day and night, ideally 80 degrees F.

Watermelon is a space hog; vines can reach 20 feet in length. Amend soil with organic matter

*continued p2*

## Vertical Gardening

BY JAMES FLYNN

Do you have walls that scream "Help me!" or "I'm bored!"? Are you too cramped for space and don't have enough room for a traditional garden? Urban gardeners have been facing these problems and have come up with ways to garden vertically. Whether it is using a pallet against a wall as a planting surface or hanging pots on walls, going vertical can be a great garden solution.

Vertical gardens can be used in many contexts and utilize all sorts of plants. These gardens can be used as herb gardens, succulent arrangements or just plain art. Since these gardens can be used on any surface, this means that you can hang them on your walls indoors, just as you would a framed portrait.

Walter Andersen Nursery has caught onto vertical gardening and we are introducing several different vertical gardens for 2013. We

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## Hedge Fund\$™ Redemption Begins

February is the month to redeem your Hedge Fund\$ points earned during the 2012 fall season. Remember the more you spend, the more you earn, and those points that aren't used will expire at the end of the month.

Not a Hedge Fund\$ member? No problem, it's easy to join and FREE! Just ask to sign up at either store and you can start earning with your first purchase. Already have an account with us, but not a Hedge Fund\$ card? Just ask for one at the register next time you are in the store. Remember you don't have to bring your card into the store with you (although it can make looking up your account faster). But remember; to earn points you must have your purchases rung up on your account.

There are a few restrictions that apply to the use of Hedge Fund\$ points, check with the stores for details.

Watch for new program details in next month's newsletter. ■



# 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

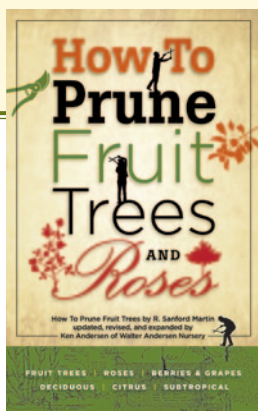
Give last applications of dormant sprays such as Liqui-Cop or Oil Spray before buds start to break on deciduous fruits and ornamentals.

### PLANT

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

### LOOK FOR

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



We've revised and expanded Sanford Martin's classic, **How To Prune Fruit Trees**. Ken Andersen of WAN has written new chapters on pruning tools and pruning roses. The original illustrations of Martin's were preserved. Buy in-store or **Buy Online!**

## 2013: The Year Of These Favorites *continued from p1*

such as compost. Add a balanced fertilizer that is high in nitrogen. Sow 8 to 10 watermelon seeds in a hill, and push seeds 1 inch into the soil. Space hills 3 to 4 feet apart, with at least 8 feet between rows. Thin plants to the three best in each hill. Fortunately, breeders have been working on varieties that still produce a large number of fruits on shorter vines like 'Sugar Baby' with vines just 3 1/2 feet long or the newest AAS Winner 'Faerie' with vines just 10 feet long.

Watermelon plants have moderately deep roots and will need watering only once or twice a week. When vines begin to ramble, fertilize with Gro Power Vegetable Food. Another application of fertilizer should be made when melons are set. Withhold water as melons start to mature to intensify sweetness.

Wildflowers can be used anywhere. In the home landscape they are ideal for creating colorful beds and borders, as well as offering a lower-maintenance alternative for large areas or replacing turf grass. Wildflowers can be planted to assist in the recovery of a landscape that has been damaged or destroyed by the actions of people, a natural disaster, or the spread of invasive plants.

Wildflower is not an exact term that is well defined. Some people say a wildflower is a plant that was not intentionally seeded or planted and grows without cultivation. Others classify a wildflower as any plant growing without the help of man regardless of the plant's country of origin. Still, others define a wildflower as a plant found in a specific geographic area that was grown from seed or plants also from that area.

Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), and black-eyed or brown-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia triloba* and *R. hirta*) are among the popular wildflowers planted by American gardeners, all of which happen to be native to the U.S.

Before purchasing seeds or plants, think about what you are trying to achieve with your planting. If you want only native wildflowers in your garden, find out what is native to your region and what type of growing conditions are needed. Do you want to attract bees and other pollinators or encourage butterflies to visit your garden? Look for plants that produce the type of flowers preferred by these insects. Are you interested in a garden that is filled with color



**Wildflowers**

from spring to fall? Choose a mix that has a variety of flowers and bloom times.

Some wildflowers have very specific soil, water, light, temperature and fertility requirements and won't grow outside of a specific geographic range or set of conditions. Others are easier to grow because they have adapted to a wide range of environments. Choose plant varieties that are matched to the sun, shade, and soil conditions as well as watering preference of your site.

Many types of wildflower mixes are available from seed suppliers. Some mixes contain only native wildflowers and may be formulated to grow in a defined geographic region or climate. Other mixes contain varieties that are both native and exotic. Some mixes have a balance of annual and perennial species to provide fast color and long-term beauty. Other mixes contain mostly annual flowers for a quick-growing wildflower garden.

Wildflower seed and seed mixes can be planted in either spring or fall. Spring rains help seeds germinate and plants get established before many weeds have a chance to grow. In warm climates, fall is a good time to plant wildflowers when cooler temperatures and winter moisture provide better conditions for seed germination and growth.

Scatter seeds by hand or with a small spreader. Seeds can be raked into the soil or lightly covered with soil. Water thoroughly right after planting and keep seeds and seedlings moist for about 4-6 weeks. Gradually reduce watering as seedlings develop. For dormant seeding, watering after planting seeds is not necessary. ■

# Words

From Walter

BY WALTER ANDERSEN, JR.



## Great Small Plants With Lots Of Color

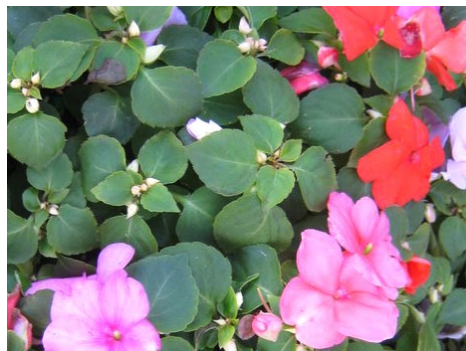
Are you looking for something that is very easy to grow and provides a lot of color?



**Begonias**

Check out bedding Begonias. They are very easy to grow, whether in containers, flower beds, as border plants, or even hanging baskets. They are usually blooming when you buy them in six-packs or 4" pots. Colors are pink, red and white and you can buy the colors separately or mix them to your liking. Also the foliage is very bright, either green or burgundy. The plants only grow to about 10" or 12" high and about as wide. If you have an old used pot out back, brush off the cobwebs and put in a little Sunshine Potting Soil and plant the bedding Begonias. You can tuck them in so they are fairly close, and you have an instant finished container that is very colorful. If you plant them in the ground, amend the soil with a good planter mix, (Sunshine is my favorite) then plant them about 6" on center for a great display until summer. They may even last longer than that. If you plant them in a wire basket with the green moss, you can plant them all around the basket, even the sides to form a solid ball of foliage and bloom. This looks very impressive. These plants require minimal care; keep them moist and scatter a little Gro Power on them about once a month and they will be very happy.

Bedding begonias can grow in sun or shade. If you have an area with lots of sun, choose the ones with the darker burgundy foliage, they can tolerate more sun than the green-leaved variety. They like to be moist, but not soggy. Spent blooms usually drop off and fall between the leaves, so the plants look clean.



**Impatiens**

Another easy-to-grow plant is Impatiens, also known as Busy Lizzie. They come in six-packs and 4" pots, and are very colorful. There are many different colors, such as white, pink, lavender, purple and a salmon color. They bloom nonstop for about six months. Snails don't like them either, which is a huge plus. They get a little taller than the bedding Begonias, about 12" to 16". Most people plant them in areas with a little shade, but they also do well with a half day of sun, perhaps more in coastal areas, where they do great in full sun. Pinch them back a little if they get leggy; it also encourages more new growth and bloom. If you like, you could plant these in a pot, placing them in the center with the shorter Begonias at the edge. A little Gro Power will keep them looking good and blooming.



**English Daisy**

English Daisy is another very easy and rewarding-to-grow color plant. Many gardeners do not even know about them. These are small and compact plants, only about 4" high and 8" wide. The little flower spikes stand about 4" to 6" above the plants. They are usually blooming in the six-packs and should keep blooming through June. They make great bedding plants if planted close together or border them along a walkway. The tiny daisy blooms come in pink, white, red, and rose with yellow stamens in the center. Plant in full sun along the coast, in hotter inland areas, they'll do better with a little shade at least part of the day. To prolong blooms, you may want to cut off some of the spent blooms. ■

## Bare Root Rose Planting

BY WALTER ANDERSEN, JR.

Bare root roses are usually available mid December to February. When buying bare root, you may find better varieties selection, more plants to choose from and they almost always cost less.

To plant bare root roses, select a warm, sunny location. Dig a hole approximately 20" wide and 18" deep. Mix the soil you removed from the hole with about 50% planter mix. If the soil is extremely bad, add a little more planter mix. Form a mound in the bottom of the hole with this mixture and spread the roots as evenly as possible over the mound.

The bud or union graft should be about 2" above the soil level. Fill the remaining portion of the hole with the soil/planter mix material and firm the soil. Make a basin approximately 18" to 24" in diameter around the newly planted rose and water thoroughly. If you are planting in containers, use at least a 14" diameter or larger pot. A larger pot allows more room for the plant and reduces the frequency of watering. Use a good potting soil for superior results. Feed monthly with a good rose food. We recommend Gro Power the first of each month beginning in February with great results. Follow the directions on the bag.

Insects and fungus are best taken care of as soon as you notice them. We recommend using Bayer Rose and Flower Care, which will take care of most problems. There are organic controls available also and you can consult with a nursery professional for help.

If you have any problems, bring a sample in for identification by a nursery professional.

Use Ada Perry's magic formula around each established plant after pruning or at planting time with bare root roses. Cultivate into the soil and water well. Use again in July. ■

## Old Ben's Specials!

Sale Prices Valid  
February 1–28, 2013

### Old Ben's Finch Socks Buy 1, Get 1 FREE!

Small Sock Reg. \$5.99

Large Sock Reg. \$8.99

Seven colors to choose from.

### Old Ben's Nyjer Seed 5lb. Bag \$9.99

Regular \$11.99

10lb. Bag \$17.99

Regular \$21.99

25lb. Bag \$34.99

Regular \$44.99 {Lowest Price Ever!}

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

## Get Your Valentine's Day Gifts At WAN!



Valentine's Day is February 14. Plants that make the day of giving and receiving special are: Stargazer Lilies, mini Carnations, Pink Jasmine Wreaths, and 'Fantasia' Cyclamen.

Don't forget that for St. Patrick's Day we'll have oxalis triangularis (Purple Shamrock), and the lucky green type! ■

## The American Kestrel Is No Songbird



BY OLD BEN OF OLD  
BEN'S WORKSHOP

The American Kestrel is one of the most common and colorful birds of prey in North America.

Because of its small size, about the size of a robin, and plumage, it can easily be mistaken for a songbird as it sits atop a utility pole or wire. However, once witnessed hovering over an open field in search of prey, the Kestrel's predatory nature becomes apparent.

A member of the falcon family, the American Kestrel is closely related to the Peregrine Falcon and Merlin. The Kestrel is often referred to as the sparrow hawk because of its small size. The Kestrel's diet consists mainly of insects and small mammals. As is the case with many beneficial predator species, the Kestrel's value lies in the role it plays in keeping insect and small rodent populations in check.

American Kestrels are apt and able hunters. They hunt large insects, bats, mice, small reptiles, and occasionally small birds. Kestrels usually hover before dropping on prey from above, pinning victims to the ground. They rarely chase prey, such as flying insects or bats through the air. Kestrels perch on wires or poles, or hover facing into the wind, flapping and adjusting their long tails to stay in place.

Bonding among Kestrels is strong and usually

permanent. A pair is established after the male takes over a particular territory. Then a female will begin to hunt and associate herself with the male. The major components that will strengthen the bond between the two kestrels include courtship feeding of the female by the male, aerial displays, and the search for a nest site. Kestrels nest from April to early June in woodpecker holes, natural cavities, niches in cliffs or buildings, and in nest boxes that are set up for them.

American Kestrels favor open areas with short ground vegetation and sparse trees. You'll find them in meadows, grasslands, deserts, parks, farm fields, cities and suburbs. When breeding, Kestrels need access to at least a few trees or structures that provide appropriate nesting cavities. American Kestrels are attracted to many habitats modified by humans, including pastures and parkland, and are often found near areas of human activity including towns and cities.

**Backyard Tip:** American Kestrels take well to artificial nest boxes. To attract a breeding pair, the box should be put up by February. Nail it to a tree 10 to 30 feet above the ground away from traffic and loud human activity. Kestrel nest boxes will be available at Walter Andersen Nursery in February. ■



American Kestrel

## Ramps Are On The Way For March

BY MELANIE POTTER

We wanted to share some information with you about ramps. A quick look on the Internet revealed that they are foraged in the Appalachian region and a warning to carry a map in a waterproof bag was suggested in case you got lost. Sounds like a lot of work so we think this solution is better. Come to Walter Andersen Nursery and buy potted sprouts.

A ramp is a wild onion native to North America that resembles a scallion with broad leaves. It is also known as a wild leek and native the eastern North American mountains where they grow in patches in rich, moist, deciduous forests. In early spring, ramps send up smooth, broad, lily-of-the-valley-like leaves that disappear by summer before the white flowers appear. The bulbs have the pleasant taste of sweet spring onions with a strong garlic-like aroma.

The best success in growing ramps is to plant commercially purchased bulbs that can be planted in spring or fall (seeds can take 12-18 months to germinate). Dig a furrow and plant the ramp bulb, then cover with a mixture of 50 percent soil and 50 percent hardwood leaves, with about 1/4 inch of the bulb tip rising above the soil. Ramps will only thrive if planted out of extended direct sunlight in a shaded area. The area in which ramps are planted must have a great deal of moisture and if it is not present naturally the plants require daily watering. The March issue of the newsletter will include a story and recipe for ramps. ■



Ramp Wild Onions

## Accidental TV (Re)Viewer

On a recent drizzly Saturday morning, I was pushing the buttons of my TV remote control, housebound and bored. I had a crackling fire in the wood stove, the dogs were warming themselves in front of it, I had a stack of magazines on the coffee table and a couple of half finished books beside me, and a tube sock filled with long-grain rice heated in the microwave wrapped around a sore knee. As I flashed through the channels, I came upon a program that caught my interest; a BBC show hosted by a rather charming young man named James Wong who introduced himself as an ethno botanist, trained at Kew Gardens in London.

Oooh, he had me at ethno botanist, which is the study of a specific culture and region of the world and how it uses indigenous plants for food, shelter, medicine, clothing, hunting, construction, decoration and religious ceremonies. I settled back to watch the program titled "Grow Your Own Drugs—Roots". I didn't let the use of the metric system in the measuring or the other British terms throw me. I was most interested in his techniques and methods more so than his actual recipes, and his ideas were truly interesting. His contention, and I tend to agree, is that many of the things we need to tend to our own well-being are probably growing in our own backyard (or our neighbors). To make his point, he concocted three remedies for common ailments: An Echinacea purpurea ice lolly (Popsicle, to those of us on this side of the pond) Valerian (Root) hot chocolate (anti-anxiety drink, even for on-the-job sipping) and a marshmallow cough syrup.

These natural elixirs, concocted before the viewer's very eyes, like any Food Network recipe, were quite interesting to behold as they came together. It is obvious that Mr. Wong is a true believer and he also gave his remedies to testers and allowed them to give their honest opinions. I know they were honest opinions, as there were some hits and misses.

The Echinacea purpurea tincture was made utilizing roots and flowers; basically all the parts of the Echinacea flower at the end of the bloom period straight from the garden after a thorough washing. It was chopped and added to vodka (for the alcohol) and put aside in a cool place for two weeks, after which its woody bits were strained out. Then, chop ginger and chilies and add to cranberry juice (in millimeters) and honey; simmer all and strain, and add lemon juice. Cool and



**Echinacea**

add 16 drops of your tincture of Echinacea. Pour into lolly molds and freeze. These are for adults only, due to alcohol in the tincture!

The other two remedies were also interesting, and concocting them is just a matter of taking the time to find the ingredients and do the work. There were mixed results with the efficacy of all remedies. It was just fascinating to think that most drugs we buy at the store come from botanicals in nature. Medicine men and Chinese herbalists were way ahead of the curve when it came to their specialties; perhaps we owe them homage and more respect than they have been given.

If you have a chance to catch this series on your cable server, it is worth a look-see. On Uverse, it is on the Cooking Channel 456. Just look for 'Grow Your Own Herbs' with James Wong on your Food Network channel. It's worth a look if you have an interest in any of the following disciplines: Cooking, medicine, herbal remedies, British TV, or killing time. It's really eye-opening to see how the earth provides for us in so many ways we do not think about and that, in turn, is a reminder to us that we need to be vigilant caregivers of the land upon which we depend for so much. DVR this series if you get a chance, don't wait until you're forced to watch it, like me!

When using herbal remedies, it's recommended to consult your medical professional. ■



## Vertical Gardening

*continued from p1*

will carry Grow Vert planters, Compo Clay planters, and the new vertical pots from Novelty. The Grow Vert planter from Bright Green is the closest to a framed piece of art. It has a wooden frame that houses a pocket system that allows for several four-inch plants to be planted vertically. There is even a Grow Vert planter that can be hand painted to add to the artistic side of vertical gardening. Compo Clay vertical gardens are made of an eco-friendly material, minerals, water, and sand that emulates stone. Lastly, Novelty will be offering a line of pots that are ready to hang on any wall. These pots have a hole on the top to allow the pot to be screwed to a wall without a pot clip.



Get creative, use the empty walls that surround you and go vertical! With these new lines of vertical planters and your imagination, who knows what treasures await your vertical gardening experience. If you have questions regarding vertical gardening, contact James at the San Diego store at (619) 224- 8271. ■

## Easter Is March 31st

Easter is March 31 and the stores already have decor and plants for the holiday galore. Living plants for the holiday include: potted bulbs, Easter lilies, mini Carnations, Pink Jasmine wreaths, and Primula malacoides (Fairy Primula).

## First Ever *Spanish* Language Garden Class Scheduled!

On March 9th we will have our first Spanish language Garden class at the San Diego store. The agenda is not set yet but, it will be a compilation of subject matter from the normal, timely material of the other classes. We anticipate a monthly class for Spanish-speakers if it is well received during the 3 month trial.

Ruben Perez will give the class and he can be reached at the store for further details 619-224-8271. The class will be held at 11am. ■

## In Passing



With sadness we report the passing of former long time employee **Greg Schingle**. Greg was one of the employees to help open the Poway store, joining the company in 1998. He retired in 2008. Greg was a huge fan of the Disney character, Goofy. His employee locker was easy to spot as it was covered in pictures of Goofy. Customers will remember that on hot days he carried a pair of scissors and Otter Pops to give to kids, and when Santa couldn't make it to the nursery for the Holiday Open House, Greg stepped in to help out. He is fondly remembered and missed by all. ■

## Dates To Remember

**FEB 18** – Both stores will be OPEN on President's Day.

## Fairy Garden Classes Return To Poway Store

BY MELANIE POTTER



**Suja Pritchard**, ceramic artist, will present two fairy house classes that allow you to sculpt your own terracotta house.

Choose from, or attend both of these dates to make different houses. On Feb.

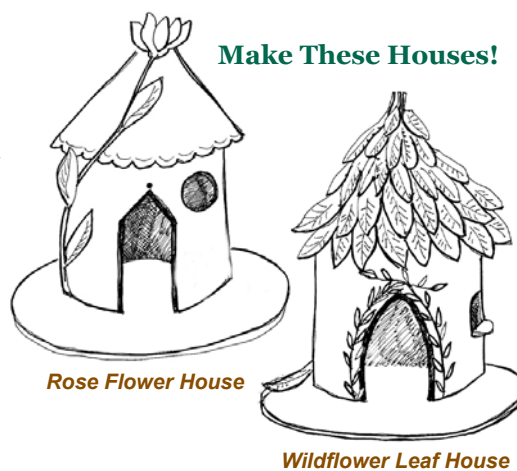
16th from 9:30am to 11am, attendees can make the **Rose Flower House**. On March 9th from 9:30am to 11am, attendees will make the **Wildflower Leaf House**. After each class, the sculpted houses will be left at the nursery until they dry. Pritchard will then kiln fire them and deliver them to Walter Andersen Nursery in approximately two weeks. Participants may return to the nursery on April 6th for a (complimentary) painting class. The painting class will start at 9:30am.

Each house sculpting class costs \$50 per participant which includes all materials (fairies not included), instruction, kiln firing and painting on April 6th. Classes are for adults and children aged 13 or older.

Children aged 10-12 may take the class with an adult assistant at no charge, and will make one house together. The nursery sells Cicely Mary Barker fairies. If you purchase fairies before the class, Pritchard will help design the fairy house you'll sculpt to fit them.

Terracotta clay does stain so wearing an apron or old t-shirt is recommended. The house sculpting classes are limited to 15 people; sign up by calling the nursery at 858-513-4900. **You must RSVP and prepay for these classes.**

Enjoy more of Pritchard's work by visiting her website at: <http://suja-pritchard.wix.com/suja-pritchard>. ■

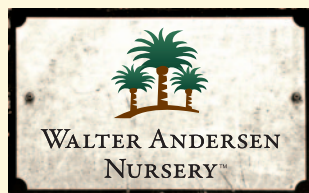


## February Garden Class Schedule

All 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. Class topics are subject to change with no notification. You may call for confirmation.

9:00AM   SAN DIEGO NURSERY	9:30AM   POWAY NURSERY
2/2 Spring Bulbs	2/2 Seed Ball Workshop
2/9 Winter & Early Spring Color	2/9 Xeriscape with Carol Fuller
2/16 Interior Plants	2/16 Fairy House Workshop \$50. Must RSVP & Prepay. Limited to 15 attendees.
2/23 Citrus & Avocado Varieties	2/23 Goldfinches with Old Ben

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[www.walterandersen.com](http://www.walterandersen.com)

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#### SAN DIEGO

3642 Enterprise Street, San Diego, CA 92110  
{619} 224-8271

#### POWAY

12755 Danielson Court, Poway, CA 92064  
{858} 513-4900



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