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Nursery™**

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SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE

*Garden Talk*

**STORE HOURS:** San Diego 8am-5pm | Poway 9am-5pm | 7 Days-A-Week

—• IN THIS ISSUE —•

Celebrating Sunflowers	1
Shamrocks, Sorrel & Oxalis	1
Hail Can Hurt!	1
When Life Gives You Lemons	3
Crying Over Split Oranges	3
That Magical Purple Pigment	3
Old Ben: Lesser Goldfinches	4
Old Ben's March Specials	4
Cats On Camera	5
To Do List: March	5
Where Are The Houseplants?	6

## Hail Can Hurt!

By Ken Andersen



San Diego is famous for its mild weather and though we rarely suffer from extremes, it does happen. When there is a significant weather event, like the one in late January, some unusual damage can appear on your plants. Hail is a rare occurrence in San Diego so you may not think of it as damaging. In actuality, hail damage to plants is very common and we

[continued p2](#)

## Celebrating Sunflowers

By Melanie Potter



The National Garden Bureau declared 2021 as the 'Year of the Sunflower' and that is something to be happy about.

Sunflowers are iconic symbols of summer and are used to emote joy, happiness and positivity. The sight of them planted en masse puts a smile on your face. Need more reasons to love sunflowers? They are pollinator plants for bees and other beneficial insects. They are easy to grow and improved varieties have an extended blooming season. It is quite the experience to grow sunflowers and a fun project for children.

*Here's a look at just a few favorite varieties:*

'SunBelievable Brown Eyed Girl' is grown by Monrovia and blooms in the spring and fall when the days are shorter. Because it is sterile, it continues to flower profusely for

[continued p2](#)

## Shamrocks, Sorrel & Oxalis— In Time For St. Pat's!

By Melanie Potter

If you are dreaming of having shamrocks for St. Patrick's Day, don't get your hopes up. There may be some confusion between them and Oxalis because they aren't the same plant.

Shamrocks are *Medicago lupulina* and include hope clover, yellow trefoil and black medick. They aren't readily available in our neck of the woods. Oxalis comes from the sorrel family and this is what you find in stores around the holiday.

They do all have leaves divided into three leaflets, symbolizing the Trinity.



Shamrock 'Oxalis regnelli'

[continued p2](#)



## Hail

continued from p1



Hail damage

see it at the nursery a few days after a storm. Customers bring in foliage samples with either numerous pock marks or there are holes on the thinner softer foliage. Thick, fleshy foliage (like the Ivy Geranium in the photo above) tends to suffer the worst of it. Succulents are also susceptible to hail damage. While not fatal, it will take some time for the plant to outgrow the damage. The only way to prevent hail damage is to physically protect the plants by moving container plants under a patio cover or into the garage. Landscape plants can be protected by row cover or an old sheet. Unfortunately, hail can be hard to predict during a storm even if it is forecast. Plants will recover so be patient. A little fertilizer can hasten regrowth. So, if after a hail storm you see this damage appear in the following days, it is not a flash invasion of an unseen pest, just a reminder of the storm that passed. •



## Sunflowers continued from p1



months and can bear more than 1,000 flowers on a single plant throughout the season.

If you opt to plant from seed, there are more than a dozen varieties to choose from. You can choose **Heirloom Titan** if you want to grow giant sunflowers (12-14' tall). These classic beauties top each stalk and have a golden flower face with dark center disk. The seeds are edible for humans and birds. You can plant small too, with **Elves Blend** which will give you large yellow blooms on short multi-branched plants. The size makes them perfect for containers, small gardens, or cut flowers.

What's in between a giant sunflower and a dwarf variety? How about **Zohar**? It grows 4'-5' tall. Zohar is bred for professional cut flower growers and is favored for the extra-long vase life. Quick, tell me the artist who painted sunflowers and you'll have the name of this variety. It's **Van Gogh** and they were named for Vincent, the Dutch painter who maybe started them on their journey to icon status. Known for their bright yellow ray petals, the center disk is a rich gold surrounded by a green center. As they mature, the disks turn chocolatey brown.

**Velvet Queen Sunflower** is an heirloom that blooms a show-stopping deep maroon color.

Finally, if you are growing sunflowers for their seeds, look no further than **Snack Seed** that were bred to provide bountiful harvests of kernels. You'll be rewarded with a classic looking sunflower with heavy heads of large, sweet, nutty seeds.

In containers, plant sunflowers in an all-purpose potting soil in full sun and water regularly. In the ground, add lots of compost. Feed with tomato and vegetable fertilizer, then enjoy your blooms!! •

## Shamrocks, Sorrel & Oxalis continued from p1

Sadly, many gardeners consider them weeds and are immune to their charm.

As usual, both stores will have this sentimental favorite which ironically has some varieties native to South Africa, Washington to California, and Mexico. Ireland is not mentioned! Most like woodland areas and become dormant in warmer weather. The emerald green leaves may sport blooms in white, pink or yellow. We have *Oxalis regenelli* "Shamrock" and *Oxalis triangularis* "Purple Shamrock". •



Purple Shamrock 'Oxalis triangularis'



## When Life Gives You Lemons

By Melanie Potter



*Or when neighbors give you lemons...*

Do you remember July 2020? It seems like a hundred years ago, but it was only a few months since we told you about retired elementary school teacher Lela Johnson who helped third graders at Pepper Drive Elementary School plant acorns in soil the nursery donated for their Kumeyyay Day project. During the summer the children brought home their projects which were then oak seedlings.



Well, that same Mrs. Johnson and husband, Bruce turned their harvest of lemons (from a dwarf Meyer lemon tree purchased from Walter Andersen Nursery) into another cool and generous project. The nursery provided a few bags for the Johnsons to fill with lemons which they then delivered to their neighbors. During a time when you are forced to limit your social activities, how thoughtful is it to receive a gift of homegrown lemons? We hope the Johnsons keep spreading cheer and sharing their growing inspiration with us. •

## Crying Over Split Oranges

By Ken Andersen



My dwarf orange tree was loaded with about one dozen ripe, bright orange oranges and they looked perfect and ready to harvest. So, I began the task of gently twisting them to pluck them off the tree and that's when I saw the horror of my perfect oranges being split, with a nasty gash on nearly half of them. Sadly, the splitting of the rind is one common ailment of citrus that

we see too often. It can typically happen on thicker skinned fruit and especially navel oranges as the navel area at the base of the fruit is naturally weaker. Though you might find insects in the split feeding on the fruit, they are not the cause of the problem. Splitting primarily occurs when there is some inconsistency in the soil moisture. If the tree gets a bit on the dry side and there is a sudden input of water to the soil, either through irrigation or rain, the interior of the fruit will absorb the water faster than the rind can grow around it. This hydraulic action puts pressure on the rind and eventually will cause it to split. If the fruit is at or near ripe and the split is caught early, the fruit can still be harvested and eaten as the damage is purely cosmetic. To prevent this from happening, try to keep the soil moisture consistent to avoid the trees rushing to take in water when it comes available. •

## Did You Know About That Magical Purple Pigment?

By Melanie Potter

Plants with purple foliage are made possible by a magical pigment called **anthocyanins**. So now you know why many annual bedding plants and herbaceous perennials have red, purple or almost black foliage. Think fountain grass, ornamental millet, some varieties of coleus, sweet potato vine, New guinea impatiens, coral bells, kale, ornamental peppers and vegetable crops such as red-leaf lettuce and purple basil.

Concentrations of anthocyanins are influenced by factors such as light, temperature, pH and presence of metal ions in the soil, as well as the presence of chlorophyll. Conditions



*Gaura linkheimeri 'Compact Pink'*

that increase the biosynthesis of anthocyanins will increase the leaf coloration. Purple leaf coloration

## Old Ben's Specials

Valid March 1-31, 2021

— OLD BEN'S BRAND —



**NEW!**

### Suet Feeder or Nesting Materials Station

Serves as a double suet feeder, or makes a great nesting materials station for hummingbirds and other wild birds. Locally-made with cedar wood, it is approx. 12.6"H x 7"W x 4"D. The holder is sturdy and easy to both fill and clean. Sides of the holder are individually hand decorated by a local artist. Suet and nesting materials are available at both Walter Andersen Nursery locations.

**Sale \$27.99** Reg. \$37.99

### Nyger Seed

Attracts Lesser Goldfinches and many other small birds. **25lb. bag**  
**Sale \$49.99** Reg. \$59.99

### No Mess Wild Bird Seed

The No Mess Advantage. Seed is hulled and chopped, will not sprout. Birds can eat all the seeds which attracts fewer pests. **20lb. bag**

**Sale \$34.99** Reg. \$39.99

### Classic Wild Bird Seed

Classic mix that attracts a wide variety of wild birds. No fillers in this mix.. **205lb. bag**

**Sale \$24.99** Reg. \$29.99

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

## Old Ben: Lesser Goldfinches

By Old Ben

NOW is the time to attract these beautiful birds. Look for feeding stations at both Walter Andersen locations. Then, come inside as we have everything you need to attract and keep these beautiful birds in your yard.

### Lesser Goldfinch Facts

> A group of goldfinches may have been pirates or miners at one time, for a few of the names they have are 007, Treasury and Vein.

> An American naturalist by the name of Thomas Say was the first to define the lesser goldfinch in 1823.

> Lesser goldfinches are most common in California and Texas. The male California lesser goldfinch has a green back and a black cap. The male Texas lesser goldfinch has a black back and cap.

### Main Characteristics

The lesser goldfinch is one of the smallest American song birds. They are between 4 and 4.5 inches in length, they have a wingspan up to eight inches and they weigh about .33 ounces.

Males have a yellow-colored underside and olive-green upper parts with a yellow rump. Their wings are dark with white wing bars and they have a black capped head. Females are duller than males and lack the black capped head.

### Habitat

Lesser goldfinches are found in grasslands, woodlands and gardens of the west and southwest United States and northern South American. They are usually found in flocks and it is common for them to be seen at garden feeders.



### Diet

Lesser goldfinches mainly feed upon a variety of seeds and they especially love sunflower seeds. They also like elderberry, cottonwoods, alders, sycamores, willows and oaks. During breeding they will occasionally supplement their diet with insects. Their favorite seed is Nyger which is used in feeders to attract them.

### Nesting

During the nesting season, usually June and July in San Diego, a cup shaped nest is constructed in a bush or low tree of small twigs and other plant material. Lesser goldfinches love to line their nest with kapok. Females lay 3 to 5 pale blue eggs and she incubates them for 12 or 13 days. During this time and for the first days after the chicks hatch, the male brings food to the nest, but after this period both parents feed the chicks. When the young are two weeks old they are ready to leave the nest, but their parents continue to feed them for at least another week.

### Predators

Predators of the lesser goldfinch include birds of prey such as the American kestrel and the sharp shinned hawk. •

— Ask Old Ben —

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



## Cats On Camera

By Ken Andersen



For years a feral cat had been spotted at our Poway store. When we realized that it was living in one of our shipping containers, we set up a trail camera and provided food and water. Sure enough, we have a short-haired black and white tuxedo kitty! The trail camera revealed something else, a long-haired gray cat, a long-haired black cat and a long-haired black and white tuxedo cat! They seem healthy and the short-haired tuxedo cat and the gray and black cat appear to be bonded as they are frequently spotted together, but the long-haired tuxedo is more solitary. They do an excellent job of catching rodents! We are hoping to safely trap the cats and have them spayed or neutered and checked for their health. The trail camera continues to capture noteworthy scenes. We received two cat beds through Buy Nothing Scripps Ranch and it didn't take them long to get used to that comfort. However, word must have got out about the upgraded accommodations because it was a short time later that the camera caught a raccoon making off with one pet bed! •

## To Do List: March



*Plant warm-season vegetables like tomatoes, peppers and squash*

### Prune

Camellias and Azaleas after blooming to shape. Cut back frost damaged plants and feed with Gro-Power to encourage new growth and regeneration.

### Fertilize

Roses and Shrubs with Gro-Power or Gro-Power for Roses. Feed Citrus, Avocado, and Fruits with Gro-Power or Gro-Power Citrus & Avocado Food.

### Plant

- > Plant Citrus, Avocados, and tropical and sub-tropical fruit.
- > Start to replace cool season bedding plants with warm season plants.
- > Plant warm season vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, and squash.
- > Be sure to amend the soil with good organic compost. Big Harvest Bale is great for edibles and ornamentals.

### Look For:

Azaleas, Spirea, Tuberous Begonias, Caladiums, Calla Lilies and Roses. •



*Look for Begonias*



*Add texture to your garden with Caladiums*



*Plant Azaleas*

## • MAKE A NOTE •



Both stores will be closed for Easter on April 4th.



## Garden Classes

Classes at both stores are suspended until further notice.



## Where Have All The Houseplants Gone?



At times our houseplant shelves look a lot like old Mrs. Hubbard's cupboards and we know how her poor dog feels when there is nothing to offer. For months now, we have struggled to stock a variety of houseplants and even the common pothos can be hard to find. You can bet that we order a large quantity but are often shorted by the growers. That makes it a challenge for those of you with special order needs. As soon as houseplants arrive, we rush to get them on the sales floor where they are quickly snatched up. Blame it on the pandemic which has

## Magical Purple Pigment? continued from p3



*Heuchera 'Midnight Rose' (Coral Bells)*

driven the demand through the roof. We see more home offices in use, home improvements making room for a specimen plant, and new hobbies investigated by people who want to take care of something. Our advice to anyone looking for houseplants, buy them when you can find them. They will be gone before you know it! •

is intensified by high light levels and by light quality as they prefer wavebands of blue and ultraviolet light. Low temperatures can increase anthocyanin accumulation while high temperatures can reduce their concentrations. A combination of low temps and high light will often produce the darkest purple leaves. Purpling of foliage can also occur when there is a phosphorus deficiency. Conditions that can limit phosphorus uptake include low pH, a poor root system, excessively wet soil, or a low soil temperature.

Getting purple foliage plants ready for market requires plants to be grown in greenhouses or indoor farms and to be exposed to high light and cool temperatures for several days before shipping. The biosynthesis of anthocyanins occurs quickly and coloration of leaves can occur within five to seven days. When this happens, we refer to plants as being in high color and it is the optimum time to sell them.

And, now you know. Magical, right? •



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SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE

*GardenTalk*

### SAN DIEGO

3642 Enterprise Street  
San Diego, California 92110  
**619-224-8271**

**Open 8am-5pm | 7 Days-A-Week**

### POWAY

12755 Danielson Court  
Poway, California 92064  
**858-513-4900**

**Open 9am-5pm | 7 Days-A-Week**

**Visit Our 2 Locations**

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