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SAN DIEGO'S GARDEN RESOURCE

*Garden Talk*

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## Bunny Proof

By Melanie Potter



*Begonias can repel rabbits*

I'm guessing the only bunny you want in your garden this month is the one that leaves eggs for the kids to find. That's because bunnies can eat their way through your yard, wreaking all sorts of havoc. Over the years, we've found that a hungry bunny will eat most anything, even the plants they were known to shy away from.

Plants that are odoriferous are good at repelling bunnies so look

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## Styling With Fashionable Houseplants

By Melanie Potter



*Monstera deliciosa*

The pandemic years have seen the sales of houseplants skyrocket for many reasons. They pack a visual punch in small spaces, they are a cheerful office mate to work-from-home folks, and they allow everyone to bring a little of the outdoors inside, including oxygen!

They are enjoying their 15 minutes of fame thanks to social media and some varieties have clearly risen to be the popular kid on the block.

Big leaves are all the rage. **Fiddleleaf figs** are still enjoying popularity but **Monstera deliciosa** is also a darling. Also vying for popularity are **Philodendrons** and **alocasia**.

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## Better Basil Debuts With Tomato Time

By Melanie Potter

I think it is a safe bet to suggest that those who plant tomatoes likely plant basil with them. Not only are they perfect companion plants, but this delicious pairing appears at many a summer gathering.

The only down side to basil is that it often wilts and dies. Not so with **Nufar basil**, a somewhat new Genovese-type basil with a sweet, potent flavor. You will appreciate its strong disease resistance. It's a super-healthy plant and the world's first F1 Hybrid that is fusarium resistant and therefore isn't prone to wilting.

There are other special features about this hybrid. According to Nufar basil plant information, this variety produces the most flavor-packed



leaves of any basil. These plants grow to 36 inches tall and produce all summer long.

Once planted, keep the soil moist. Watch for wilting. According to Nufar basil information, when this one wilts, it's the plant's signal that it requires more water. •



## Fashionable Houseplants continued from p1



*Alocasia*

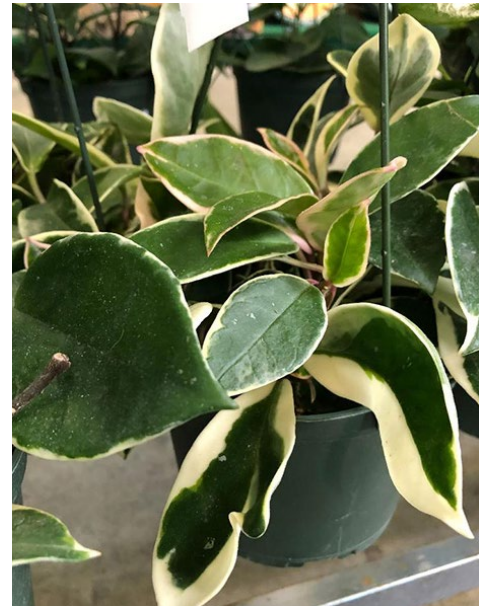
Do you know what jeans have in common with this next popular group of houseplants? Holes. Holes in jeans are still trending and folks are clamoring for plants with holes, slits, and splits. Think **'Little Swiss' monstera**, **aroids**, **pothos**, and **philodendrons**.

Leaves that look like a canvas can't be ignored. Swirls, splashes, variegation, and streaking of color may leave you thinking an artist



*Tiger Fern*

Painted some houseplants' foliage rather than nature. **Marble Queen pothos** continues to be sought after with its heavily mottled leaves of green and white. **Tiger Fern** has beautiful markings on lemon-lime colored foliage. Variegated leaves are the rage so you'll find a large selection at our stores that includes at any given time **hoya 'Lisa'**, **philodendron 'Birkin'**, **Scindapsus picta 'Splash'**, and **peperomia scandens 'Variegated'**.



*Hoya 'Tricolor Queen'*

Don't be afraid of color when it comes to houseplants. **Aglaonema** really deliver when it comes to bright hues and it's hard to miss **Ficus 'Ruby'** or **Maranta 'Prayer Plant'**. The somewhat newly introduced **'Raven'** is a ZZ plant and sports shiny chocolate-colored leaves once its lime green new growth ages. The shapes of leaves shouldn't be overlooked either. You'll find interesting shapes and sizes in **peperomias**, **calatheas**, **alocasias**, and **aglaonemas**. •



*Scindapsus 'Satin'*



*Maranta 'Prayer Plant'*



*Calathea ornata*



## Bunny Proof

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Try Rabbit Scram

for Salvias, Geraniums, Lantana, Lavender, and herbs (especially thyme). Other plants they shy away from include Bacopa, Foxglove, Alyssum, Primrose, Impatiens, Begonias, Calendula, Daylilies, Yarrow, Lamb's Ears, Allium, and Baby Tears. You can safely grow daffodils and fritillaria as these are bulbs the bunnies pass up. Bearded Iris also are a bunny turn off.

If you find yourself hosting bunnies with voracious appetites, we have some thoughts as to how you make your garden less appealing. Plant in containers so plants are off the ground and out of reach of bunnies. Small spaces can be secured with a screening material or fencing that keeps them out. Raised planters can be a life saver for vegetable gardens as they provide a barrier against bunnies. You can also try liquid deterrents such as Liquid Fence (egg, garlic, sulfur scent-ed repellent), Shake Away (fox urine granules), Rabbit Scram (dried blood granules) or hot pepper sprays such as Go Away Rabbit & Deer or Shot Gun. •

## Growing Trees Is Easy

By Delia Juncal & Anne Fege



### Now is a great time to plant a tree.

Walter Andersen's Nursery has small and medium-sized trees in stock in 5-gallon sizes, suitable for San Diego yards. (If the widest planting area is less than 25 feet, plant a "small" tree. If the area is 25 to 50 feet, plant a medium-size tree.) View videos at <https://katestrees.org/>.

Why buy trees in 5-gallon containers (instead of 15-gallon or larger sizes)? Trees planted in small containers adjust much better to their "new home" site than trees that have grown longer in containers. Trees in 5-gallon size are also easier to transport and plant, as a smaller hole needs to be dug!

Like children, young trees need care, especially in their first three years.

Learn how to care for it properly so that it will grow strong and tall, providing shade for years to come.

Regular watering is crucial. Water your trees twice a week with enough water to wet the rootball plus a little more. In the second year, water once or twice a week with 10 to 15 gallons of water, and in the third year, water every two weeks. Then water deeply once a month in any months that there is no significant precipitation.

Mulching helps save water and promotes healthy root growth. Place wood mulch around the base of your tree to reduce temperature, hold site moisture, and protect from weeds. Place mulch 2 to 4 inches deep and cover as much of the tree's root system as possible. Keep mulch 4 to 6 inches away from your tree's trunk.

During the first two years, leave lower branches on your young trees to encourage growth. After two years, you can begin shaping your tree for healthy structure. Do not remove more than 25% of the tree's live branches in one year, and make sure there is always one central leader to encourage good structural growth. Remember, never "top" your tree! Go to <https://katestrees.org/> for more tree growing information. •

## Add This Ivy Imposter To Your Succulent Collection

By Melanie Potter

Sometimes customers decide they don't want the plant they picked up in one area of the nursery and willy nilly put it down wherever they are. Returning an ivy to its rightful spot was exactly what I set out to do when I saw that it had been left in the cactus/succulent area. But there was

**continued p6**



Senecio macroglossus



## Broaden Your Horizons & Welcome New Plants

by Ken Andersen



*Coreopsis gigantea*

Early in my nursery career, I had a penchant for all things tropical such as orchids, ferns, bromeliads and of course the more unusual arums.

When it came to California Natives, there just were not very many nurseries growing them and the ones that they did grow were not the greatest looking cultivars available. After a series of severe droughts in this state and a turn away from thirsty tropical plants, nurseries began looking for drought-tolerant plants from all over the world to supplement their inventories and to fill the demand for low water use plants. While some nurseries turned to plants from Australia, South Africa, and the Mediterranean, a few started looking closer to home. That is when Moosa Creek Nursery near Fallbrook entered the scene with one of the most extensive catalogs of California Natives, if not the largest of any nursery.

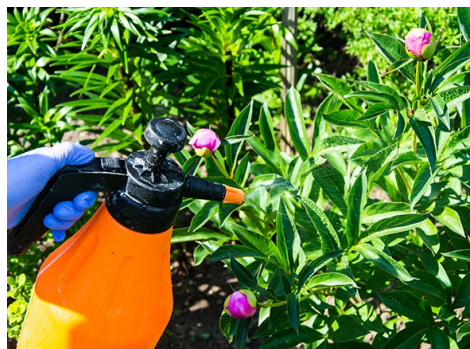
One of the more interesting plants they grow is *Coreopsis gigantea*, or as the name suggests Giant Coreopsis.

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## To Do List: April



Plant warm-season bedding plants



Spray for garden pests

### Fertilize

Feed Lawns, Palms & More. Use Marathon Fertilizer for tall fescue, and Bonide DuraTurf to feed grass and control broad-leaf weeds. Feed ornamentals with Gro-Power or Gro-Power Plus. 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.

### Plant

- > Warm-season bedding plants
- > Dahlias, annuals, and perennials
- > Warm-season vegetables and vegetable seeds
- > Tomatoes, tomatoes, tomatoes!
- > Specialty hot peppers are here



Look for blooming roses

### Look For:

- > Flowering deciduous trees & shrubs
- > Blooming roses & bulbs
- > Ceanothus
- > Tropicals



### Pest Control

For edibles & ornamentals, keep insects under control by hitting them early. On edibles, use Bonide Bon Neem or Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew. For ornamentals, use a systemic control like Bayer 3-in-1 Insect Disease and Mite Spray. •





## Welcome New Plants

continued from p4

Some gardeners may recognize Coreopsis from their gardens as they have been available for many years as bedding plants. *C. gigantea* is very different because it can grow up to 3-4 feet tall on a fleshy trunk. The foliage is an interesting, almost succulent fine structure, and does not have leaves as we would recognize them when compared to the bedding variety. During the rainy season, they are covered in bright green foliage which will fade in the dry summer months. The flowers are bright yellow single daisy-like flowers that bloom in profusion during the growing season. I have only seen one stand of them in open areas and have included a photo. I took this late in the season as they were starting to fade, but during the last rains, they were showing off in all of their glory!

My lesson learned is to not write off any category of plants without delving into what they can do. One of the greatest things about living in Southern California is the incredible diversity of plants we are able to grow, from tropical to desert and everything in between! •



## Old Ben: Using Water To Attract Backyard Birds

By Old Ben

Water is an important part of your backyard bird habitat. Wild birds need a continuous supply of fresh clean water at all times of the year, for both drinking and bathing.

Water is particularly important during the winter when natural supplies may be frozen. Dry, hot summers can also make water harder to find.

Birds have no sweat glands, so they need less water than mammals. They do lose water through respiration and their droppings. Most small birds need to drink at least twice a day to replace lost water.

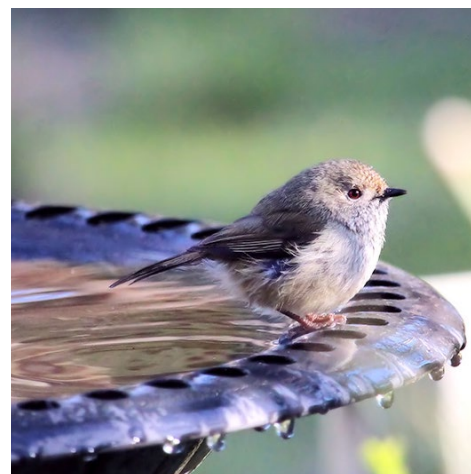
Birds get liquid they need from their food and by drinking. Many insect eating birds get most of their water from food. Seed eating birds have a dry diet and they do need to drink more.

Water is freely available to small birds at the shallow edges of ponds and streams. They may also drink water droplets that form on leaves, especially if they live in woodland areas. Species such as swallows and swifts swoop down onto a body of water and scoop up a beak full of water while still in flight.

Most birds drink by dipping their bill in water and throwing their head back to swallow. Pigeons and doves are able to immerse their beaks and can drink continuously.

### Maintaining a Birdbath

The key to attracting a large number of birds is to keep your birdbath full of water at all times. The bowl should have a gentle slope so birds can wade into the water. Your bowl should be no more than one to three inches deep. If deeper, add small pebbles or rocks so the birds can land on them.



Anything deeper than three inches will cause the birds to avoid your birdbath. In the natural environment, most sources of shallow water are intermittent. Although puddles form after a hard rain, reliable pools are rare and birds will travel great distances to visit them. Keep your birdbath full and you'll be well rewarded. Remember to clean your birdbath every couple of days. Don't let the water become stale. Clean off the bottom of the bath immediately if green algae starts to form.

If you are trying to make your backyard a better place for birds, few things are more attractive than a well-maintained birdbath. Just add water and watch the fun. •

— 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)

## Ivy Imposter

continued from p3

something different about this ivy because it looked succulent-y despite the familiar, triangular ivy-like leaves and tendrils. Sure enough, it belonged right where it was.

It was actually a *senecio macroglossus* and related to the “strings of” (pearls, dolphins, and bananas) succulents. This variegated trailing vine has green leaves that are edged in creamy white. It grows fast and vigorously to more than 3’ long. Exposure to direct sun can induce purple stress flushing of the stems. It makes an exceptional choice for hanging baskets and can occasionally flower with pale yellow, daisy-like blooms. In the wild, it grows in and around the forests of South Africa, spreading along the ground.

To care for, grow it in bright sunlight with good drainage and infrequent watering to prevent rot. •

## Garden Classes: April

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 <https://www.walterandersen.com/classes-events/>.

### SAN DIEGO | 9:00AM

4/2

Staghorn Fern Care & Re-Mounting with Olivia

4/9

Create Your Own Edible Landscape with Chuck McClung

4/16

Container Gardening with Constanze

4/23

Lawn Care with James

4/30

Pollinators with Ryan

### POWAY | 9:30AM

4/2

“What Is an Arborist and When Should I Call One?” with Kurt Peacock

4/9

All About Tomatoes with Farmer Roy

4/16

No Class – Easter Weekend

4/23

Ensuring Success in Your Summer Garden with Richard Wright

4/30

Organic Insect Control with George Allmon



**Both stores will be closed April 17 for Easter**



**Walter Andersen Nursery™**

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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

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