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Garden Talk

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Summer Is Pumpkin Planting Time

By San Diego Seed Company & Walter Andersen Nursery Staff



Learning to grow pumpkins is a gateway to learning how to grow squash, beans, melons and corn since they have similar planting methods. Since they have large seeds, they have a large amount

of energy reserved in their seed coats to burst through the soil easily and quickly. The key to this happening is soil preparation and a sunny location.

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Get Out There!



It might look like George is planting a forest and he is. He is getting out there, in Del Mar because the **San Diego County Fair** is just around the corner. This year's fair theme is indeed, 'Get Out There', and celebrates enjoying the great outdoors. In fitting with the theme, look for our display to have a nod to camping. •

How To Stop Fungus Gnats

By Amanda Macarthur & Walter Andersen Nursery Staff



Fungus gnat traps

The most significant issue with fungus gnats is that by the time they're flying around and annoying you, they're already a major problem for your plants. That's why it's beneficial to know how to stop fungus gnats the minute you notice them.

The real harm comes from the larval stage when they are in the soil. Fungus gnats, which look a lot like fruit flies, love moist plant soil. They lay eggs just below the surface, and the larvae dig down to feed on fungi and plant material, including thin roots. Enough fungus gnats can seriously damage or kill a plant.

How to stop fungus gnats before they ruin your plants.

There are a few ways to prevent and get rid of fungus gnats. Several of these prevention measures are also helpful in stopping a problem even after it's started.

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Composting Basics

By George Allmon



Composting is the natural decomposition of organic matter in a controlled manner. It is nature's way of recycling organic material. In a healthy compost, (pile or bin) microorganisms break down organic materials into compost; a nutrient-rich soil amendment.

Utilizing compost in your yard and garden will improve the health and quality of your soil ecosystem from the ground up! In addition to the many soil enhancing benefits of composting, there are other benefits as well:

- > Recycles the food scraps and yard plant cuttings you generate at home.
- > Reduces materials that might otherwise be disposed of in landfills such as leaves, grass clippings, tree prunings, and food scraps.
- > Financial savings by making your own quality soil amendment!
- > Improve plant health in your garden by turning dirt into soil!

To be successful in composting your ingredients should include a proper balance of the following materials:

Carbon-rich materials ("browns") can include dry leaves, plant stalks, grass clippings (dried) and twigs. The carbon-rich materials provide food for the microorganisms to consume and digest.

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Pumpkin Planting Time continued from p1

Prepare the soil by removing sticks, rocks, weeds, and any other debris in the soil where you are planting the seeds. Otherwise, they could end up on top of the seeds and keep them from germinating. It is a good idea to add compost or Bermuda-free horse manure and worm castings if possible. Mix those into the soil by raking them in or double digging them in. Mix in Dr. Earth or E.B. Stone Tomato & Vegetable Food fertilizer as well.

After preparing the soil for planting or creating a "seed bed," the area should look clean; soil should be finely raked and light and fluffy. It is a good idea to ensure ample moisture in the soil. When you hold a hand full of soil, the soil should stay clumped together loosely, indicating moisture in the soil. If there is insufficient moisture, you need to thoroughly moisten the soil before planting because seeds require moisture to germinate, and the seed will die if the soil dries out at any point during germination.

For best planting results make a furrow or indentation to plant your seeds in. You can make a furrow with your hand or the handle of a tool. This allows the soil particles to condense and moisture to be wicked



up to the seeds from capillary action. It also allows you to see where the seeds are placed and not get lost in your spacing. Using a furrow is a good habit when planting any seed directly in the soil. After placing your seeds in their furrows, water them gently and cover them with finely sifted soil or potting mix for the best results.

The soil should remain moist during the germination period of 6-10 days. This may require watering multiple times a day during the heat. You can use garden shade cloth to keep the soil moist between waterings.

Finally, you will need to encourage pollinators to visit your pumpkins and melons. Without their help, you won't have any fruit setting. •

Pollinate With Monrovia



Monrovia wants you to **Bee A Winner** and score a chance to win a pollinator-friendly plant during its contest to celebrate June being **National Pollinators Month** and observing **Pollinator Week**. There are two ways to enter. You can come to our stores and look for the special Monrovia pollinator display, where you will see signage that lets you scan a code. The second option is to enter at go.monrovia.com/bee-a-winner. This promotion runs through June 25. Monrovia will contact winners. •

Composting

continued from p2

Nitrogen-rich materials (“greens”) include grass clippings (fresh) and food scraps. The nitrogen-rich materials heat up the pile to create ideal conditions for the material to break down.

Water (moisture) The pile should be as moist as a damp sponge.

Air (oxygen) Turning your pile and introducing oxygen isn't required, however, doing so will encourage faster breakdown and reduce odors. A well-functioning, healthy compost will have a pleasant earthy scent. A recommended ratio according to the EPA is “two to three parts carbon-rich material (browns) to one part nitrogen-rich material (greens).” The San Diego County Department of Public Works webpage on composting suggests a ratio of 50% Browns to 50% Greens.

Compost bins or piles can be simple to elaborate depending on your space and needs. Bins can be home built or purchased. If space permits, you can also compost in piles.

There are two “styles” of composting: Active composting in which you turn the pile to introduce oxygen, and passive composting which does not involve turning and in time the pile will eventually decompose on its own (though much longer than an active pile).

As your compost pile begins to decompose, the temperature of the pile will begin to rise, especially in the center. According to the EPA, **a well-maintained backyard pile can reach temperatures of 130° to 160° F.** Reaching these temperatures can help reduce the presence of pathogens and weed seeds.

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Fungus Gnats

continued from p1



Let the Soil Dry Out

Since fungus gnats like moist soil, one of the best preventive tactics is to let the soil dry out between waterings. Dry soil makes it less likely that the insects will want to nest or lay eggs.

Mosquito Bits®

The most effective way to control fungus gnat larvae. This strain of Bt is soaked in water for half an hour. After skimming off the remaining bits, pour that water into your infected soil and it will control the larvae. Repeat weekly until gone and see the package label for additional details.

Cover the Soil with Sand

A layer of sand on top of your potting mix prevents the gnats from reaching their desired moist soil and laying eggs.

Yellow Fly Traps

This is the modern-day version of those ghastly strips of flypaper that would hang from the ceilings in your uncle's friend's brother's garage bar that you had to go to for July 4th family picnics. Only these are much more attractive, and there's much

less of a chance that you're going to run into them and get your hair stuck to one.

They look like little yellow plastic birds or squares or whatever shape you get. The bright color and maybe some magic attracts the fungus gnats, and they stick to the trap. Of course, this doesn't solve the issue of your fungus gnat larvae. Still, if enough adults get trapped before they can reproduce, you will eventually lower and maybe eliminate your population.

Move the Culprit Outdoors

If you notice that the source of your problem comes from one or two plants. Move that plant outdoors until you can get the issue under control.

Repot Your Plants

This is an undertaking, especially if you have a lot of plants. However, it might be necessary. I have some good news and bad news here. Fungus gnats are not very skilled fliers. If you have your plants spread out, you may only have a problem in one area. Here's the bad news. If you have a whole bunch of plants hanging out in one part of your home, you may have to do some serious repotting to ensure complete removal of all infested soil. •

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To Do List: June

By WAN Staff



Plant summer vegetables

Plant

- > Bedding plants
- > Bougainvillea, Hibiscus & tropicals
- > Fruit trees & shrubs
- > Look for Jacaranda, Magnolias, Hydrangeas, Star Jasmine, Dipladenias, Plumeria, Fuchsias, & roses
- > Summer vegetables & annuals

Pest Control

Look for slugs and snails; apply Sluggo or Sluggo Plus. Watch for mildew, rust and rose slug on roses; spray with Bio-Advanced 3 in 1 Insect Disease and Mite Control, or Neem. Eliminate sowbugs, earwigs, cutworms, slugs and snails in vegetable gardens with Sluggo Plus. Keep flies around trash cans under control by using fly traps that can catch them before they invade your trash.

Fertilize

For lawns, use Marathon Fertilizer for tall fescue. Feed ornamentals with Gro-Power. Feed vegetables with Gro-

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Summer Fun With Sunflowers

By Food Gardening Network



There are annual and perennial sunflowers. Annuals may be branching, with multiple flower heads, or upright, with single flower heads. Although perennial and annual branching sunflowers are edible, they're usually grown as ornamentals, while the single-headed upright sunflowers are known for producing abundant and delicious sunflower seeds.

Growing from Seeds or Seedlings

Sunflowers have a reputation for being really easy to grow. All you need is a sunny patch of well-draining soil to get your sunflower garden growing.

Planting in the Ground or in Raised Beds

Sunflowers have deep taproots, so wherever you plant your sunflowers, make sure you have loose, loamy, well-draining soil. Try to plant your sunflowers in an area that's not subject to heavy winds. You might want to plant alongside a building or a fence; those large sunflower varieties get pretty top-heavy as the flowers grow!

Companion Plants

Take advantage of organic teamwork in your garden to deter garden pests, as well as weeds. Companion

planting is a great way to help plants protect each other. For example, squash, peas, and tomatoes are not a grasshopper's favorite food. Adding these plants with your sunflowers can deter grasshoppers from gnawing on your sunflowers.

Growing in Containers

It's entirely possible to grow sunflowers in pots! But take a realistic approach to this plan. Don't try to plant giant varieties in a pot for your deck. Instead, consider growing dwarf varieties, which grow to no more than 3 feet tall.

Maintaining Your Sunflower Plants

You can water once a week. But don't over-saturate the roots, because dry roots are healthier than soaked ones. Fertilize with a rose and flower food. You may find aphids, caterpillars, beetles, thrips, leafhoppers, borers, and the sunflower fruit fly on your sunflower plants. Depending upon what ails your sunflowers, you may treat with insecticidal soap, neem oil, or Bt.

Most Popular Varieties to Grow

Mammoth Grey Stripe Sunflower
Mammoth Grey Stripe sunflowers are probably the most iconic of all tall sunflowers, producing the

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To Do List: June

continued from p4



Use Gro-Power Citrus & Avocado Food

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.

Prune

- > Ornamentals for shape
- > Dead head roses, dahlias & other flowering plants
- > Prune stone fruits after harvest •

Composting

continued from p3

Do not use milk or meat products, fats, oils or greases, manure from meat-eating animals, cheese or dairy products, treated or painted wood, or ashes from a fireplace in the compost.

To learn more, follow this link to the San Diego County Public Works Department's Web Page on Composting: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/dpw/recycling/composting.html>. •

Sunflowers

continued from p4

delicious grey and white striped seeds that may take you back to your childhood.

Chocolate Sunflower

What a beautiful contrast to a standard yellow sunflower! This lovely, unassuming flower radiates in a warm shade of chocolate brown.

Ring of Fire Sunflower

Ring of Fire has stunning bi-colored petals that flare outward from red to yellow. This branching variety will produce several blooms per stalk.

Mongolian Giant Sunflower

The Mongolian Giant sunflower is the largest sunflower in the world, reaching toward the sky at a height of up to 14 feet with enormous blooms up to 18 inches across!

Black Russian Sunflower

The Black Russian sunflower



produces oil-rich seeds that are frequently part of wild bird mixes.

Super Snack Mix Sunflower

If you're looking for huge, easy-to-crack-open seeds for snacks, the Super Snack Mix sunflower makes an excellent choice.

Sunspot Sunflower

This dwarf sunflower variety grows only about 16 inches tall, but it produces flowers 10 inches across! •

Are Your Favorite Houseplants The Same As Those Preferred by Tik Tok Users?

By Garden Center Magazine & Walter Andersen Nursery Staff

The gardening experts at AllAbout Gardening.com analyzed Tik Tok data to establish which houseplants have the most views on the platform. The most aesthetically pleasing are:



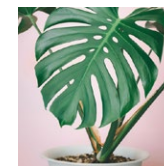
1. Aloe vera was the most popular and amassed more than 2.3 billion (yes billion with a b). Maybe

because it is easy to maintain and thrives in sunlight and warmer temperatures. It's also handy if you burn a finger in the kitchen.

2. Bamboo - Viewed 1.5 billion times, the favored bamboo is Lucky Bamboo, a type of Dracaena.

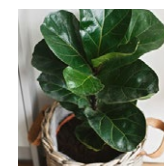
3. Pothos - It trails, it's easy to grow, it has loads of varieties with foliage that's green, white, yellow, or a combination. It didn't get billions

of views but racked up just over 312 million views.



4. Monstera - This is an incredibly popular plant that is easy to take care of, also known as the Swiss cheese plant (*Monstera deliciosa*) and received 242 million views.

5. Sansevieria or snake plant is known for absorbing toxins. It racked up 161.9 million views.



6. Finally, the Fiddle-leaf fig received 109.6 million views. It's a great statement plant that can grow

up to 10' tall indoors. It thrives in bright spots that don't receive direct sunlight. You'll also see it sold as *Ficus lyrata*. •

Father's Day
is June 18th!



Both stores have a selection of indoor plants, gloves, hats, garden necessities, pots, tools & more. Stumped and not sure what is the right gift? How about a gift card and let Dad shop for himself! •



Reminder:
Both stores
will be closed
Tuesday,
July 4th



Garden Classes: June

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 STARTS AT 9:00AM

6/3

Growing Peppers
with Richard

6/10

Growing Tomatoes All Year
with Chuck McClung

6/17

Companion Planting
with Kathleen

6/24

Plumeria Care & Culture
with Mike Atkinson

POWAY STARTS AT 9:30AM

6/3

Growing Vegetables
in Succession
with Farmer Roy

6/10

Vegetable Seed Saving
with Adams

6/17

Plumeria Care & Culture
with Mike Atkinson

6/24

Bonsai Basics
with Richard Wright



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