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The Beauty & Benefit Of Felco Shears

By Ken Andersen



Recently the GardenTalk Radio co-hosts, (myself, George Allmon and John Clements) recorded a show with special guest Jennifer Thomson from Felco. Felco is a premium line of cutting tools engineered and manufactured in Switzerland. They are arguably the finest tools for the horticultural industry you can buy. Jennifer was kind enough to bring samples for us to experiment with and explained how and why they were constructed the way they are.

While I have been a fan of Felco shears for many years (I own several pairs), I was not aware what sets them apart from the rest.

[continued p2](#)

Let's Feed The Birds!

By Ken Andersen



Dahlias Guide To Shapes & Sizes

By National Gardening Bureau

Dahlias continue to be a popular landscape choice and make excellent additions to border plantings, flowerpots, and cut-flower gardens. They flower continuously from summer through the first frost and will bloom prolifically if spent flowers are removed regularly. They do best in full sun and prefer well-drained sandy soils but will tolerate heavier clay soils, especially if amended with sand or peat moss.



Dinnerplate

Dahlias can grow as short as 12 inches and as tall as six feet depending on the variety. Classified by their size, shape, and color, the selection of dahlias means there's something for everyone! Colors range from yellow, pink, purple, red, scarlet, orange, to white and several varieties are

multi-colored, featuring stripes and two-toned petals.

Dinnerplate

Dinnerplate Dahlias are the most dramatic of dahlias with huge blooms up to 12 inches across!

[continued p3](#)

Remember Old Ben who provided a popular brand of bird products? Since he retired to Texas and his products were discontinued, we have been looking for a replacement food of similar quality.

At a recent trade show in New Orleans, we found one! **Cole's Wild Bird Products** has a fantastic line of top-quality bird seed for your feathered

[continued p2](#)

The Birds!

continued from p1



friends! Through Cole's we have been able to replace most of the best sellers that were lost when Old Ben's closed.

Cole's Wild Bird Products Company is a true "mom and pop" success story. Back in the early 1980s, Richard and Nancy Cole started experimenting with different bird seed in their backyard because the "birdseed in a bucket" they bought at the grocery store wasn't attracting the beautiful songbirds they wanted to see. They devoted hours researching the dietary needs of their feathered friends to find just the right combination of ingredients that would bring the most birds to their feeders. Neighbors started noticing the increased bird activity in the Cole's yard and came begging for the secret. Soon the first dreams of an entrepreneurial business were born.

They would mix and bag their own seed in the garage at night after work and deliver it to neighbors and local stores on the weekends. A few years later Richard's daughter, Elaine, joined the family enterprise.

Eventually, demand became so great they all quit their "day jobs" and devoted themselves full time to the birding and nature business. Now just over

Felco Shears continued from p1



The engineering and design are extraordinary with an ergonomic fit that comfortably fits your hand, gives you the maximum cutting power possible, and reduces fatigue. The blades are made of an alloy steel that holds its edge much longer than other brands, making cuts easier which reduces fatigue. One of the best-selling points of Felco shears is that every part is replaceable. If you do not lose your shears, you will never need to purchase another pair, just replace the worn parts. Both our stores stock the most commonly worn parts, blades and springs, and we can order other parts you might need including the iconic red handle covers.

During the conversation with Jennifer we noted that the nursery had purchased knock off shears from other manufacturers, some of which are so similar that you can put Felco parts on them, for a lesser price. We told her we bought some in for bare root season a few years ago. Bare root rose season is a true test of shears as you are pruning, literally, thousands of roses in less-than-ideal conditions with dirt and mud commonly on the plants. While these new knock offs started well it soon became apparent how inferior they were. The blades did not keep their sharpness and underperformed

compared to the Felcos. Needless to say, these new shears did not last the season and were replaced by the previously used Felcos. Our lesson learned was that you can replace with Felco parts but by then you are approaching the price of a real pair of Felcos.

Most models are available in right- and left-hand styles and a few different sizes. For folks who don't think right or left hand makes a difference, come in and see for yourself. Being left-handed I was astounded at the difference; I think you will be too! •



Poway Resumes Sharpening Service



After the unexpected passing of the owner of Ronin Sharpening, who provided tool/knife sharpening services at our Poway store, we have been looking for someone capable of filling his shoes. We are pleased to say we can provide the service again offered by **Tio's Mobile Sharpening**. Service will begin April 5 at our Poway store only. Service will be available the first Saturday of each month from 10am-2pm.

30 years later, the Coles are known throughout the birding community as leading experts and trailblazers in feeding and attracting wild birds.

You will find Cole's Wild Bird products in both stores. Selection includes: Black Oil Sunflower Seed, whole peanuts, a blend, Sunflower meats, Finch Mix, raw peanuts, dried mealworms and wild bird food. •

Dahlias Guide continued from p1



Cactus/Semi-Cactus

Dinnerplate is not actually an official classification. These magnificent blooms are registered under many other dahlia types. These beauties bloom continuously from summer through the first frost.

- Giant blooms, growing to 12 inches in diameter
- Petals are sometimes twisted or pointy
- Growing up to four feet tall
- Great for border gardens
- Height and size add intense visual interest to the garden



Pompon & Ball

Cactus/Semi-Cactus

Cactus Dahlias get their name from the pointed rays of petals that give them a prickly look with double flowers that come in a range of colors. These unique varieties bloom all the way through summer and tend to hold up well.

- Curled petals give blooms a spikey look
- Blooms range from 2 to 12 inches across
- Plants usually grow to at least 40 inches tall
- Adds an unusual textural element to the garden

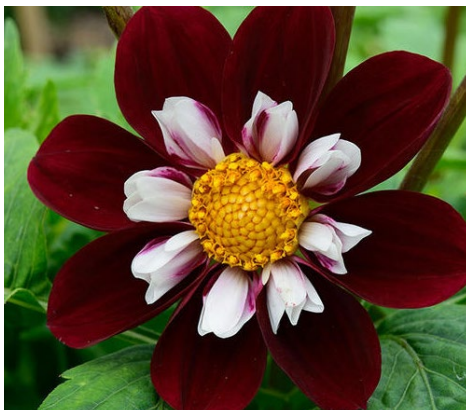


Decorative

Pompon & Ball

These small, double flowers have an open center and are globe-shaped with rolled petals that curve inwards. Petals are usually blunt at the tips and are often perfectly symmetrical in their arrangement. Beautiful in bouquets or as patio plantings with vibrant shades of pinks, yellows, and oranges.

- Petals form a spiral
- Most varieties feature small flowers
- Can grow up to three feet tall
- Striking swirls of symmetrical petals



Anemone & Collarette

Decorative

Decorative Dahlias are unique and have double flowers that have petals with tips that are flat or rolled. They add a dazzling display to landscapes and cut flower arrangements. This classification comes in two categories; "formal" Decorative varieties tend to have broad and flat-tipped petals with symmetrical arrangements while "informal" varieties have irregular petal arrangements with rolled tips. These come in a huge range of sizes, making them suitable for a great variety of landscaping applications.

- Formal varieties have evenly spaced, flat-tip petals
- Informal varieties have irregular petal arrangements of twisted or wavy petals
- Come in a variety of sizes but typically have large blooms
- Varieties can be as short as 12 inches and as tall as six feet!

Anemone & Collarette

Anemone Dahlias feature one or more layers of petals surrounding a cluster of small florets that form a pincushion-like center. Collarettes have a layer of flat or slightly cupped petals surrounding an open center. Flowers are solid or bicolor and come in a range of colors from deep burgundies and oranges to bright yellows and whites. These dahlia blooms tend to be smaller than other types and are good for borders and containers.

- Unique formation of larger outer petals surrounding inner layer of smaller petals
- Small blooms, up to four inches in diameter
- Great for border and container plantings
- Most varieties grow between 40 and 48 inches tall

It's High Time For Tea Time

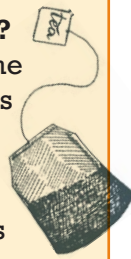
By Melanie Potter



How will you celebrate April 21, National Tea Day?

We will start by sharing some interesting tea facts, perhaps while you enjoy a cuppa.

variety > There are more than 3,000 varieties of tea in just a few categories: black, green, yellow, white, purple, oolong and pu-erh. All come from the plant, *Camellia sinensis*.



62 different countries grow tea

more than 3,000 varieties of tea



4 yrs > It can take up to 4 years for a plant to be ready for harvesting.

top 10 > Teahow.com mentions tea being grown in 62 countries. The top 10 (in no particular order) are: India, China, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Argentina and Japan.

A Tea for What Ails You

- Herbal teas are known to have health benefits which scientific studies confirm. Gastric distress

continued p5

Dahlias Guide continued from p3



Peony-Flowered



Mignon



Orchid

Peony-Flowered

Peony-flowered Dahlias have small flowers with two or more layers of petals surrounding an open center disc. Several peony-flowered varieties have dark-colored foliage, setting them apart from other dahlia types. As with most dahlia varieties, peony-flowered types bloom continuously from summer through first frost. These make great border and container plantings and will also hold up in cut flower arrangements for up to a week.

- Flowers are typically four to six inches in diameter
- Varieties grow two to four feet tall
- Often with irregular petal shape and unique, dark-colored foliage
- Nice for border or container plantings

Mignon

Mignon Dahlias are classic blooms, compact with a rounded, daisy-like appearance displaying a single layer of petals around golden centers. Available in various shades of pink as well as soft yellow, red, and white. They have a relatively short growth habit making them a versatile option in the garden.

- Daisy-like petal arrangement and look
- Blooms are three to four inches

- Plantings reach about 20 inches tall
- Great for containers or window boxes

Orchid

The spider-like look of Orchid Dahlias makes them the most unique of dahlia types, featuring one ray of florets surrounding the center or double blooms with no center showing. Single-layered Orchid Dahlias often resemble pinwheels with vibrantly colored rolled petals and bright orange or yellow centers. Double-flowered varieties have swept-back petals that roll inward.

- Varieties grow two to four feet tall
- Uniquely shaped petals in single and double layers
- Resemble Encyclia orchids
- Versatile for planting in classic or contemporary gardens

Dahlias are grown from tubers which are similar to bulbs but with potato-like skins. Dahlia tubers can overwinter in the ground in zone 8 and higher or be lifted after the first frost and stored over winter in colder climates. They prefer warm soils and a moderate amount of water; too much water can cause tubers to rot. Dahlias make great cut flowers. In fact, the more dahlia flowers are cut, the more the plant will produce. •

Tea Time

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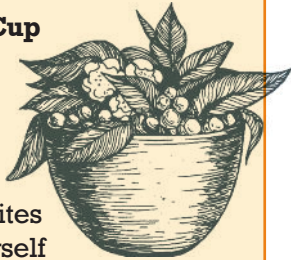


can be calmed with ginger or peppermint teas. Chamomile and lavender teas can soothe stress and hibiscus tea can lower high blood pressure.

- Green teas have less caffeine than black teas so sleep on that!

From Plant to Cup

Here's a very quick overview of how tea is produced, but visit some websites and see for yourself how interesting the process is.



- Shrubs are pruned to about 4' which keeps them easily reached for efficient harvesting. Harvesting is done by hand so as to not bruise the leaves.
- Once harvested, leaves are sent to a factory where they are spread out to dry, weighed and separated into their category (black, white, oolong, green).
- Leaves are dried then rolled where they are wrapped in bundles and squeezed so the essential juices move to the surface of the leaves.
- Leaves are then dried again to remove any moisture, then graded, tested and shipped to retailers for sale. •



Don't Rely On Florists For Your Alstroemerias—Grow Them Yourself!

By Melanie Potter

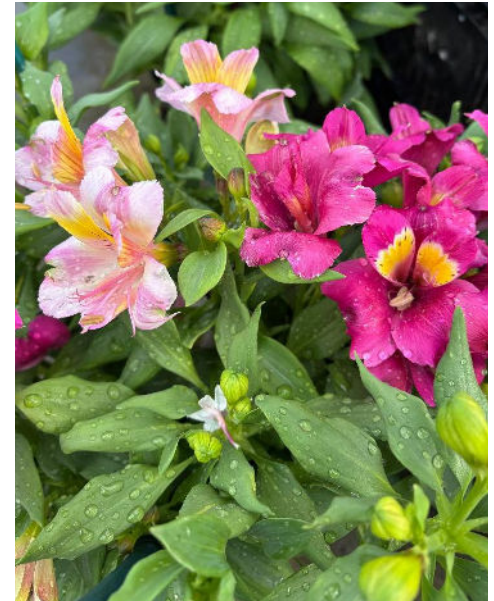
Early signs of spring began appearing in March when gorgeous geraniums, dahlias and alstroemerias arrived. Also called Peruvian lily or Inca lily, these perennials are a staple in the florist trade and prove to be a hardy, colorful and easy-to-grow addition to your yard.

Native to South America, the hybrids available now are better than ever with sturdier stems and the offer of a longer blooming season. We receive shipments from December through July because of their constant availability from growers. The blooming season begins in spring and continues through early fall.

Pick a color, any color. The selection includes yellow, apricot, orange, salmon, pink, red, mauve, lavender, purple, cream, white and bi-colors. The plants are made more striking by their markings - contrasting blotches and flecks at the neck of their azalea-like flower. Plants can grow to 3 feet high. The plants grow well in the differing micro climates of San Diego. Cooler temperatures are preferred and a rich, loamy soil that drains well is ideal. In coastal areas they need sun all day, but can take some filtered sun in the late afternoon. Inland areas will need morning sun with filtered light in the afternoon and good air circulation. Alstroemerias also do well in pots (start with a large container to accommodate their large root system).

Despite being thought of as drought tolerant, do provide regular and deep watering for best blooms.

Alstroemerias do not require heavy feeding. If you want to feed them, we recommend our all-time favorite Gro-Power.



Remove the stem when a flower has faded on the plant, preferably before seed pods develop, which slows down the blooming process. Remember to pull the stem (at the soil line) and flower rather than cutting it so the stem is separated cleanly from the rhizome.

Alstroemerias are easy to divide. They just need to be separated, or pulled apart to make more plants. Because they are slow to reestablish, Alstroemerias should be divided only when they have completely outgrown their place in the garden. Divide each plant in half in October to ensure growing a full, lush plant sooner. •

Holiday Closing

April 20

Both stores will be closed for Easter.



To Do List: April
By WAN Staff



Plant tomatoes!



Look for blooming roses

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:

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

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.

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Yellow Sac Spiders & Their Bites

By Randy Supczak



Editor's Note: When one of our employees experienced a bad spider bite, the culprit was deduced to be a Yellow Sac Spider. Since it isn't a well known spider to us, we asked an expert to provide some schooling on the subject.

Spiders in genus **Cheiracanthium**, commonly called **Yellow Sac Spiders** or **Long-Legged Sac Spiders**, are common in San Diego County with two documented species.

These spiders are small to medium sized with 8 eyes, pale yellow to brown in color, typically without markings, stripes, etc. Their legs are slender, with the front-most pair longer than the other pairs. These are tree dwelling spiders, found in trees, bushes, and other vegetation. This is an interesting fact; they do not use silk for prey capture, instead are wandering hunters. However, they create small sac-like structures from silk for different uses, including resting and mating.

Yellow Sac Spiders are of particular interest due to reports of the ability of their venom to produce necrotic ("rotting flesh") wounds in people, similar in nature but reportedly less severe than a bite from the infamous Brown Recluse. Such cases have been reported in North American, Europe, and South Africa (Vetter et al. 2006).

Diagnosing necrotic wounds due to spider bites is difficult; it requires collecting the spider suspected of the bite and correctly identifying it, which is uncommon after someone is bitten (Divito et al. 2009). It would generally also require multiple confirmed cases from the same species of spider to conclude it was not a one-off event unrelated to the spider. This has resulted in controversy between entomologists and arachnologists who study



Photo by Randy Supczak

spiders on the one hand, and medical professionals diagnosing wounds presented to them on the other hand.

In a case report described by Divito et al. (2009) as "an extensive case of dermonecrotic" injury, the authors concluded a bite from a Yellow Sac Spider was the "probable" cause, while acknowledging that an offending spider was not found (though Yellow Sac Spiders were found to "infest" the locker room where the bite allegedly took place) and that the wound itself was atypical of what has been attributed to these spiders in the past. Such cases are common and have led to multiple species initially being considered capable of necrotic wounds, while later studies have disproven this based on confirmed human bites, studies with animals, or studies of their venom.

In their 2006 paper, Vetter et al. reviewed confirmed Yellow Sac Spider bite data from the US (10 verified bites over 50 months) and Australia (10 verified bites over 27 months). Common effects included redness/red mark and swelling; pain or discomfort was reported in all cases. Symptoms were similar

[continued p7](#)

To Do List: April
continued from p6



Feed palms and tropicals



Use Captain Jack's to rid pests

Feed vegetables with Dr. Earth Organic Tomato and Vegetable Food. Feed citrus, avocado, and fruit trees with Lilly Miller Citrus and Avocado food. Feed palms and tropicals with E.B. Stone Hibiscus & Palm Food.

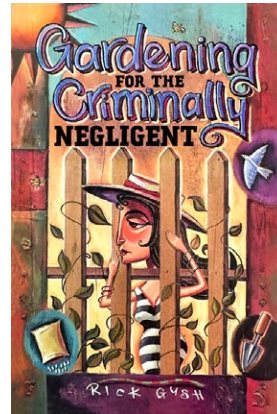
Pest Control

For edibles & ornamentals, keep insects under control by hitting them early. On edibles, use Bonide Neem or Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew. For ornamentals, use a systemic control like BIO Advanced Shrub Care. ●



Two Great Books Now On Kindle!

By Ken Andersen

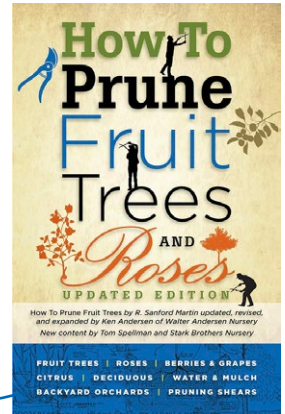


GARDENING FOR THE CRIMINALLY NEGLIGENT

www.amazon.com/Gardening-Criminally-Negligent-Rick-Gush

HOW TO PRUNE FRUIT TREES AND ROSES, UPDATED EDITION

www.amazon.com/How-Prune-Fruit-Trees-Roses



illustrated book anywhere you are.

With the completion of the *Gardening for the Criminally Negligent* Kindle edition, I decided to revisit an electronic version of our popular pruning book, *How To Prune Fruit Trees And Roses, Updated Edition*. When we first republished this work by R. Sanford Martin, we did try to go the electronic route as well. However, at that time creating a Kindle book was a bit more complicated and time consuming than we expected. With the success of the GFTCN book under our belts I decided to revisit this project and working with Ty, we followed the established path of publishing a Kindle edition and it is now available.

To get your copy of the Kindle editions of these books, follow the links above. Enjoy the reading! ●

Spiders continued from p6

between the US and Australia. None of the 20 verified bites resulted in necrotic wounds. A literature review was also conducted and only included cases where bites from Yellow Sac Spiders were confirmed; out of 39 cases, only 1 resulted in a minor necrotic wound.

Individual responses to a spider bite, insect bite or sting, etc., can vary, however, based on rigorously reviewed cases by arachnologists, it cannot be concluded that Yellow

Sac Spiders are medically significant or capable of routinely causing necrotic wounds. ●

References

Divito SJ, Haight JM, English JC, Ferris LK. An extensive case of dermonecrotic arachnidism. *J Clin Aesthet Dermatol.* 2009 Sep;2(9):40-3.

Vetter RS, Isbister GK, Bush SP, Boutin LJ. Verified bites by yellow sac spiders (genus *Cheiracanthium*) in the United States and Australia: where is the necrosis? *Am J Trop Med Hyg.* 2006 Jun;74(6):1043-8.



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RADIO

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Shows This Month:

4/5 – Ken, George & John with Renee Murphy, plant scientist

4/12 – Ken, George & John

4/19 – Ken, George & John joined by guest Natalie Stout, American Rose Society Consulting Rosarian and San Diego Rose Society board member

4/26 – Ken, George & John

Guests subject to change without notice



walterandersen.com

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	POWAY
9:00AM	9:30AM
Classes TBD	4/5 Common Tree Pests & Treatments with Arborist Pedro Berry
	4/12 Citrus Care, Culture & Varieties with John Clements
	4/19 All About Strawberries with Richard Wright
	4/26 All Herbs with Kat



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

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