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*Gardeners know
the best dirt*

Website:
scrippsmesagardenclub.com

Flourishing in our gardens

Scripps-Mesa Garden Club

My morning walk in the garden one day was especially rewarding, because I found that my Nancy Garrison Passion Vine was blooming. Nancy was perhaps my favorite professor of all times. She teaches entomology at UC Davis. She is a brilliant and talented instructor. Her lectures keep one glued to her every word. My favorite memory of Nancy is when she introduced me to the Madagascar Giants Hissing Cockroach. I was amazed when it hissed loudly and intently at me. I was absolutely astonished at its size. Anyway, Nancy is a fabulous professor and to honor her one of her students decided to name his first hybridized plant after his favorite professor. (More inside.)



*Photos and story
by Bob Gale
Former S-M Garden
Club President*



**S-M Garden Club
Website**
scrippsmesagardenclub.com

*If you want a
guided tour of the
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The Secret to A Tremendous Tomato Crop by Bob Gale



One of the big secrets is to be sure and get a big box of cheap powdered milk and add the dry powdered milk to your soil before you plant the tomatoes. The calcium in the milk powder keeps the tomatoes on the plants from getting bottom end rot and it also invigorates the plants and makes the vine structure very strong. I also mix a good amount of compost with the soil before I plant. I never plant tomatoes in the same place in less than three years. This helps keep the diseases out of the soil and gives the soil a chance to totally rebuild itself between crops. ***Cont. next page.***

And Grapes Too!

I would guess my grapes get between 4 and 5 hours of direct sunlight a day. And I also think they get a lot of reflected sunlight from both houses, mine and the neighbors. So, with the actual sunshine and reflected light, I would guess they probably get about 7 hours a day. Whatever they get they are some very happy grapes. My grapevines are 18 years old and they have really taken off. The vines run nearly my whole length of my property line on the west side of the house. I have grown them from 4 vine cuttings that another Master Gardener gave me about 20 years ago. I started the cuttings in 2 one gallon pot for 2 years before I planted them in the ground 18 years ago. They are the red flame variety and they are heavy duty producers. I usually just use lots of Miracle-Gro Liquid Fertilizer. I just spray it on every other week, I just use my garden hose and the applicator from Miracle-Gro and spray. Grapevines are remarkably easy to start from cuttings. For whatever reason they absolutely love their home and produce a lot of grapes to show their gratitude.



Scripps-Mesa Garden Club Newsletter

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Contributions of articles, suggestions, artwork, and gardening tips are warmly welcomed. This newsletter belongs to the Scripps-Mesa Garden Club members and is intended to reflect their gardening interests and experiences. Please take part in its mission and contribute an article or a photo.

Another Tomato Tip ...

Epsom Salts will help tomato and pepper plants grow and produce larger, tastier yields. Late in the season increases tomato and pepper yield and keeps plants green and bushy; early in the season added to the soil to aid germination, early root, to prevent blossom-end rot and it enables the plant to increase photosynthesis which enables the plant to be greener and more productive.

Two tablespoons of Epsom Salts to a gallon of water once a month, one tablespoon of Epsom Salts per foot of plant height around the base of each plant. Side dress plants every six weeks beginning soon after leaves appear and continuing through the end harvest.

The weather for setting tomatoes has been perfect this summer. Tomatoes need 60 degree temperature or so at night to set fruit and we've had that each and every night. In addition, they do not like it much over 86 during the daytime or the blossoms will drop. Temperatures of 86 or above have the effect of making tomato pollen sterile. Therefore, the vines have been working overtime, because of the ideal temperatures and they have set many, many, tomatoes. It has really been fun observing and seeing how many tomatoes one can produce in a very small space.



Dragon Fruit Blooms Are Beautiful and the Fruit Tasty

By Bob Gale

I discovered another of my joys of the summer season, and that is observing my dragon fruit plant (Pitaya Catus) in bloom. The blooms will then go on to develop into a reddish fruit with an interesting and tasty white interior dotted with tiny black seeds. The fruit is delicious and super sweet. It has a unique fruity flavor that really adds a wonderful dimension to a fruit salad. Another Master Gardener and friend Gail Sims gave me the cuttings to start what is now my gigantic dragon fruit plant. However, despite the size of my dragon fruit plant I will probably only get 12 to 15 fruits. I don't know which is more enjoyable the fruits or the blossoms.



Burgmansia

While enjoying my walk in my garden I discovered that my Heather's Wedding Bells Burgmansia was in bloom. This beautiful hybridized burgmansia produces very large white blossoms, that makes a very fragrant statement. Edna Murphee hybridized and patented this gorgeous double flowered burgmansia 2013. Her objective was to create a burgmansia plant with a double pure white to cream colored very large blossom, which she was able to accomplish. Each blossom is approximately 15 inches long and about six to eight inches across the bottom. I have really enjoyed growing this plant and watching it develop. I've decided to develop it into a small tree. At the present time it has up to 30 blooms at a time. If I am successful in developing it into a small tree it will have well over a hundred blossoms each time. And it blooms up to 12 times a year. Always remember it super easy to start a burgmansia plant from cuttings.



It's Easy to Start New Brugmansia Plants from Cuttings

It's really super easy to start a brugmansia plant from cuttings. You just take an 8 inch or so cutting from the brugmansia plant you wish to propagate. First remove two or three of the bottom most leaves on the stem. Then, if there are large leaves on the cutting remove 2/3 of each of the leaves with a sharp knife. That way the leaves that are still attached, will now be down sized by 2/3. If you leave the whole big leaf on the cutting, it will not be able to absorb enough water to keep the leaves going and produce new roots. Plant the cutting in potting soil with the at least 2 empty leaf sockets in the dirt. Now, the plant hormones that are in leaf sockets (that are now below the soil line) will tell the brugmansia cuttings to change its function from growing a leaf to producing root cells. Wallah! Now, the process of growing a new plant has begun. Watch for new leaf growth on the cuttings and once you have four or five new leaves on the cutting, your cutting is fully rooted. Now, you will have a new fully rooted brugmansia plant and it is ready to be planted in your garden.



August Chores

- Plant last round of summer vegetable seedlings early in the month.
- Buy seeds now for fall planting while best selection is available. Peas, chard, broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, brussel sprouts, celery kale and collards make good choices.
- Buy spring bulbs starting now while they are dormant. Next month chill in the fridge away from veggies and fruit. Plant when the weather cools.
- After harvest, fertilize citrus trees.
- Check herb garden especially mint, oregano and thyme. Harvest some to dry for autumn dishes.
- Till eggshells broken into very small pieces into soil to provide calcium, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium to support spring planting.
- Mix in coffee grounds, which are rich in nitrogen, to your compost.

Gather seaweed at the middle of the beach . Add it to your compost pile. Or make a layer of 4 to 6 inches in your garden. Or using a large pail, make a tea of seaweed and water. Allow to brew for several weeks. Stir occasionally. Strain liquid into a spray bottle and use as plant food.

Contributed by Helen Plutner

As I volunteer at Torrey Pines Reserve, I recently received this email and thought members might be interested in checking it out. TORREY PINES VIRTUAL SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS will be available on Zoom. RSVP to Torrey Pines Camp. torrey.pines.camp@gmail.com

For those that missed the Xeres Society webinar on *Bring Back the Pollinators*, they plan to post the talks shortly. You can check out the upcoming virtual lectures at <https://www.xerces.org/events/webinars>