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Earth Day—April 22

Scripps-Mesa
Garden Club



Monarchs Thrive in Susan's Garden

1) I received the caterpillar habitat in December. I set it up and found three Monarch caterpillars on February 12, 2021 and placed the milkweed plants and the caterpillars in the habitat.

2) My grandkids check the experiment.

3) In two weeks, the caterpillars had become chrysalis and hung from the roof off the netting. For a month they hung and developed gold bands, and actually got pulled off during the torrential rains. We gently reattached the chrysalis to the milkweed, not sure if they would survive.

4) See next page) On March 21, three monarchs were in the habitat, hanging to the milkweed or the netting.

5) next page) By 3/28/2021, all had flown out into the sunshine. It felt so good, perhaps an analogy for these times.

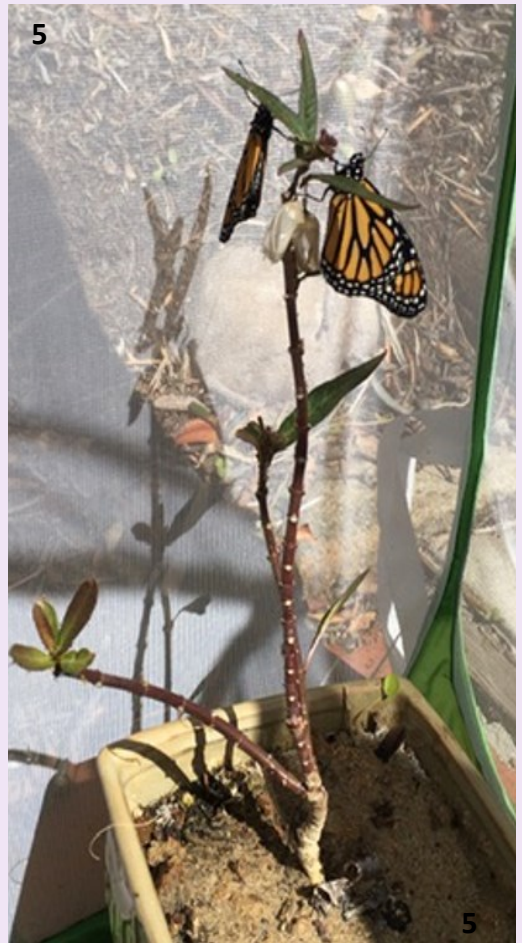
6) Empty chrysalis

For those interested, the actual structure collapses and can fit in a very flat box. One can start inside, perfect for other climates, and then release the Monarchs outside when the season is right.



*Chrysalis
become
butterflies
and
return to
Nature*

Story and photos
By
Susan Castellana



Lowe's Has Free Garden Kits

Lowe's will be giving away free Garden-to-Go kits every Thursday in April starting on the 8th. To receive your complimentary kit, all you have to do is head on over to [Lowes.com](https://www.lowes.com) to reserve one and look for garden-to-go-kits. You can then pick it up the following Thursday during a special curbside event. There will be a different Garden-

- **The Garden-to-Go kit** sponsored by Miracle-Gro, was available on April 8, includes a Bonnie Foodie Fresh Plant, 8-quart Miracle-Gro Potting Mix, 8-oz Miracle-Gro All Purpose Water Soluble Plant Food, globes, and exclusive recipes from professional cook and food stylist.
- **The Lowe's Mystery Garden Pinata by CAMP**, available on April 15, but sign up on the 8th, includes a biodegradable flower pinata, mystery seed bombs, and mystery growfetti.

On April 22, the **Garden-to-Go kits include tree saplings** given out in honor of [Earth Day](#) (species varies by region). Sign-up 15th **Lowe's by CAMP Butterfly Quest**, available on April 29, includes wooden pieces to assemble and decorate, paint, a paintbrush and milkweed seeds to help families create a [butterfly garden](#).

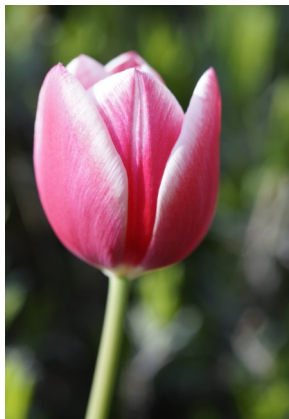


Spring Flowers and Their Messages



Iris

*Wisdom,
Hope, Faith*



Tulip

*Happy
Years*



Lily

*White-Purity
Pink-Prosperity*



Sweet Pea

*Pleasure,
Gratitude*

How are your winter tomatoes?

Bob's Corner

Some of our friends have told us they don't grow winter tomatoes, because you don't get much of a harvest. However, we've never found that to be true. Here's our harvest of tomatoes from one day in March.

The only difference we find between the summer and a winter tomatoes are that the winter tomatoes are a bit smaller. However, we find that the flavors are a wee bit deeper and they are a wee bit more flavorful, because they have to work to overcome the cool nights. That seems to intensify and deepen the flavors. It seems to us that our own home grown tomatoes just seem to be a little nicer and better tasting than those you purchase at the store during the winter, as well.

Bob Gale, Master Gardener



Roger's Gardens Shares It's Routine for a Tomato Bonanza

FULL SUN IS BEST

Full sun is usually best, unless you are in a really hot inland valley.

A simple rule of thumb: The larger the tomato, the more sunlight it will need. At least 8 to 10 hours is best. Six hours of sunlight is about the minimum to produce at least some fruit.

GROW ORGANICALLY

Great tomatoes begin and end with great soil.

Organic, biologically active soil, teaming with microbes, earthworms and other life is essential. All our soils at Roger's Gardens are certified organic and the highest quality. Our best soils are *Bu's Blend Potting Soil* (for pots) and *Bu's Blend Compost* (for the ground) as well as our *OMRI and CDFA Certified Roger's Gardens Organic Potting Soil and Planting Mix*.

Use organic fertilizers.

They last longer, help build healthy living soils, are safer, better for the planet and produce more flavorful tomatoes. Don't use synthetic chemical fertilizers. Our staff and Tomatomania's favorites are the organic *Down To Earth* fertilizers .

THE RIGHT SIZE CONTAINER

Most tomatoes are going to be six-to-eight-foot giants by mid-summer.

If you are planting in containers, we suggest a container that is about 18 inches across and similar in depth. Anything smaller and your plants will show their unhappiness – just when they are at their productive peak.

HOW MUCH AND HOW OFTEN TO WATER?

Water according to the soil – not the calendar.

How much is easy – whether in a container or in the ground always apply enough water to thoroughly saturate the soil all wayto the depth of the furthest roots. How often depends on soil moisture, not the calendar. When first planted, tomatoes might need more frequent watering than later on when their roots are deeper into the soil.

For newly planted tomatoes the soil should dry to about one inch before the next watering. As your tomatoes grow, the soil can dry a bit deeper between irrigations, maybe to two inches and eventually perhaps to three inches. The best way to know this is to simply put your finger into the soil, until you get into a rhythm and get familiar with the soil.

Most important is to water according to the soil, not because it has been a certain number of days since the last watering.



Propagating a Staghorn Fern

by Susan Castellana



In June of 2020, I wanted to take the 'pups' from my mature staghorn and create another plant. I used a knife with a serrated edge to cut behind a wide bright green circular leaf that also had small "stag horn" leaves protruding. I made sure to have a thick root area at the base of my cut area.

I selected a board that was larger than the clump and leaves, Next, I drilled two sets of holes on the horizontal side edges and then another two on the top to hang. These were for the wire to hold the fern.

I placed wet sphagnum moss in the center of board and then some moist potting soil/ peat combo. Next I placed the fern.

Using a pliable wire, I wrapped across the fern, holding it in place. The wire went through the holes and was twisted on the back, tightly. I attached wire through the top holes too.

Additional information:

These ferns are epiphytic, which means they grow mounted on plaques or other substrates, such as trees or plants in the wild. Stag-horns are not happy in pots, and enjoy hanging. They thrive in a shaded location, but can handle more sunlight if given more water.

I water my fern about twice a week, and let the water drain. In addition, I crush egg shells and soak them to make a water solution with calcium. I also mist my new transplanted fern.

I have fertilized with a well-balanced fertilizer.

You can clearly see the two types of leaves on the staghorn fern. When propagating, one needs to cut behind the circular bright green leaf and capture the antler leaves along with the base underneath.





April Garden Chores

- ◇ Switch from planting cool season crops to warm season crops like beans, corn cucumbers, eggplant, melons, peppers, squash and summer tomatoes.
- ◇ Close to your kitchen, create an herb garden for easy access.
- ◇ Trade your traditional lawn that needs a lot of water and mowing for a low-water, labor-limited ground cover.
- ◇ Plant summer blooming bulbs like dahlias.
- ◇ Plant annuals like marigolds and petunias.
- ◇ Plant roses while you can see the colors, and can smell the scent they offer.
- ◇ Fertilize acid lovers like azaleas, rhododendrons, and camellias now that they have bloomed.

Contributed by Marc Hutchinson



Gardeners Never Miss a Beet