

# GARDENING SUGGESTIONS

July | Aug  
2020

## Living in Unsettled Times

*"We all live under the same sky,  
but we don't all have the same horizon."*

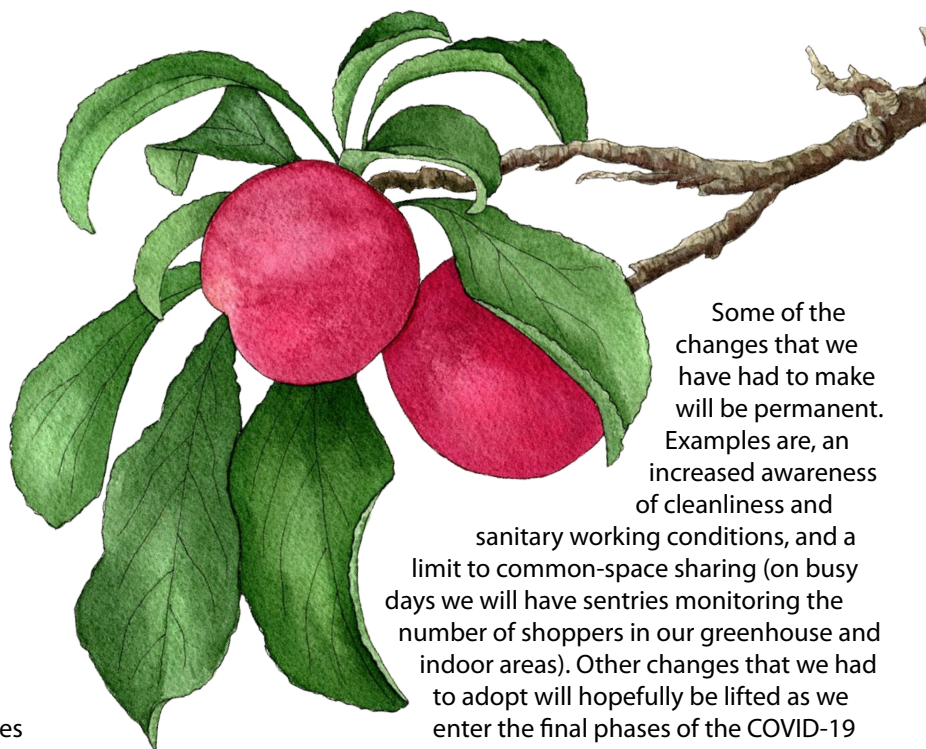
—Konrad Adenauer

Witnessing the events of the past four months has made me aware I mustn't take anything for granted. As a citizen of a country that is trying to come to grips with a history of racial injustice, I try to not be complacent. Every day I ask myself what I can do to make a lasting difference. Protesting unwarranted use of force by police against black Americans, standing up and calling out civil rights abuses, and of course voting, are all important actions.

The lead-in to all of this unrest was a global pandemic that required changes to our daily routines and caused anxiety levels previously unheard-of among the general population. Lucky for us, gardens provide a respite from much of this insanity, a chance for contemplation, and an opportunity to spend quality time at home while providing food and beauty. We at Berkeley Hort are adapting, and we want to thank you for your patience as availability of plants, seeds, and supplies starts to get back to normal.

### HOLIDAY CLOSURE

We will be closed on **Saturday, July 4**  
in observance of Independence Day. Enjoy!



Some of the changes that we have had to make will be permanent. Examples are, an increased awareness of cleanliness and sanitary working conditions, and a limit to common-space sharing (on busy days we will have sentries monitoring the number of shoppers in our greenhouse and indoor areas). Other changes that we had to adopt will hopefully be lifted as we enter the final phases of the COVID-19 shutdown. It is my dream that by the end of this year we will be able to offer special orders, merchandise holds, outgoing deliveries, casual shopping, garden seating, and group (especially kids) visitors. Oh...and dogs.

Most of our staff came back to work as things began to open up, but some employees' health and home situations kept them from returning to their previous position. Since springtime we have added some new faces to our staff, for you to meet during your next nursery visit. **Haley**, oversees our Pottery & Containers department. **Tala**, leads us into Bulb season. And **Amy** is our exuberant Gate Greeter & Stock Labeling Clerk.

These are extremely unsettled times, and dark clouds will loom until after November 3. Mark that date on your calendar. You know what to do. In the meantime smell those Geraniums, and pick those fruits!

—Paul

## WEEKEND SPECIALS

**July 3**

### Ground Covers

cell packs ~ 30% OFF

**July 10-11**

### Terra Cotta Pottery

all sizes ~ 25% OFF

**July 17-18**

### Deciduous Fruit Trees

all sizes ~ 50% OFF

**July 24-25**

### EcoForms Pots

all styles/colors ~ 25% OFF

**Jul 31-Aug 1**

### Salvias (flowering sages)

#1 size pots ~ 30% OFF

**Aug 7-8**

### MaxSea Plant Foods

1.5 lb canisters ~ \$14.25 (reg. 18.99)

**Aug 14-15**

### Japanese Maples (Acer)

all varieties ~ 30% OFF

**Aug 21-22**

### Hats

25% OFF ~ For your head

**Aug 28-29**

### Grasses

#1 size pots ~ 30% OFF

LIMITED TO STOCK ON HAND.  
NO DELIVERIES ON SALE MERCHANDISE.

## Sage Advice

Which genus of plants is most important to California gardeners? My vote is for **Salvia**, the common sage. Not so much that other genera are unworthy of recognition, but as a group, salvias comprise a huge range of sizes, forms, colors and uses unequaled for Mediterranean gardens.

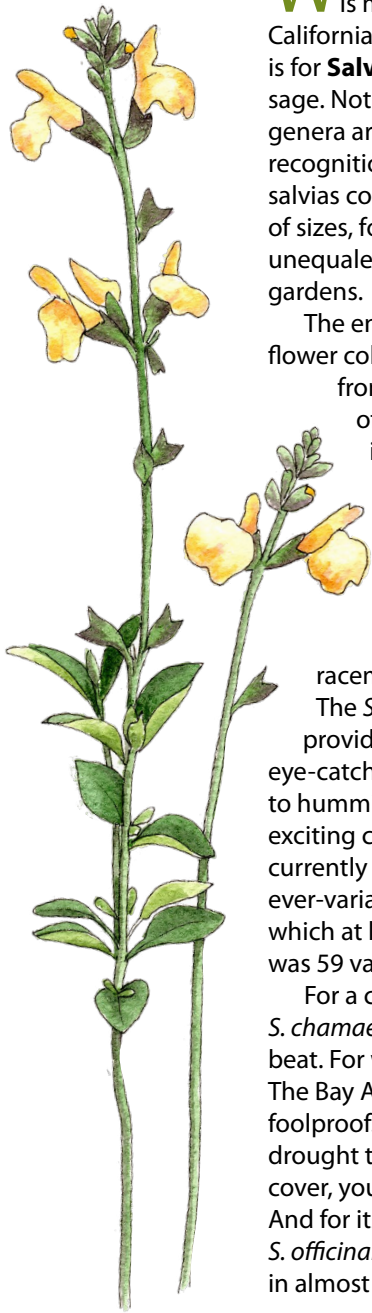
The entire spectrum of flower colors is represented from the pure white of *S. apiana* to the incredibly black *S. discolor*; and from the blighted-looking brown flowers of *S. africana lutea* to the intense blue racemes of *S. uliginosa*. The *S. coccinea* group provides some of the most eye-catching reds so attractive to hummingbirds. Even more exciting color selections are currently coming from the ever-variable *S. greggii*, which at last count here, was 59 varieties!

For a colonizing habit *S. chamaedryoides* is hard to beat. For winter flowers in The Bay Area *S. leucantha* is foolproof. For a tough and drought tolerant ground cover, you'll find *S. sonomensis*. And for its culinary value *S. officinalis* can be grown in almost any conditions

where drainage is adequate. Several sages can be grown in containers including *S. coahuilensis*, *S. farinacea*, *S. microphylla grahamii* 'Red' or 'Purple' and *S. semi-atrata*. Other salvias create showy mounds of color for dry hillsides, such as *S. clevelandii* or the hybrid 'Bee's Bliss'. One of the largest growing sages is *Salvia gesnerifolia* 'Tequila' which develops into a massive shrub covered with multitudes of showy red flowers surrounded by distinctive black bracts.

If you're growing sages for the first time, most if not all attract bees. I welcome these visitors in my garden but people with young children or sting allergies may choose to avoid them. While not all salvias are perennial...most are looking their best by late summer.

Somewhere, somebody is reading this and saying "I can't believe he didn't mention Salvia (name one of thousands), it has been amazing in my garden". Yes, it's true; with so many to choose it seems like folly to mention only a handful. Look for an ample supply at the nursery in both 4 inch pots and one gallon size cans now, and if you need help planning for special conditions don't hesitate to ask to ask for some *sage advice*.



## BUSINESS HOURS

**OPEN** 9:00 am - 4:00 pm  
(No entry after 3:40 pm)

*Closed Thursdays & Sundays*

## SAFE SHOPPING RULES

We are not accepting cash. Credit card, gift card, and on account only.

If you have a cough, a fever, or any COVID-19 symptoms, you will not be allowed to enter the nursery.

A face covering is required to enter the nursery.

At all times, maintain a six-foot distance from other customers and staff.

Please do not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact.

Bathrooms are closed to the public.

No animals are allowed in the nursery.

Children must stay with their guardian at all times (limit 2 children per adult).

We must limit the number of customers in the nursery at one time.

## Living with Roses



This is the time of year when the roses have come into their full glory. I see them showing off all over Berkeley, where every block seems to have at least several traffic-stopping displays. It's also the time when many roses start to have problems with insects and disease, and people start calling for advice.

My philosophy when caring for roses is: keep it safe and simple. Roses are to be enjoyed; life is too short to let them become tyrants. Here are a few easy steps that will help keep your roses beautiful all summer.

1. To prevent powdery mildew, spray every 10 days with a mixture of 1 Tbsp. baking soda plus 2.5 Tbsp. horticultural oil per gallon of water.
2. To prevent rust and blackspot, prune out inner branches to increase light and air-circulation, and remove lower leaves up to 18 inches from the soil.
3. To increase flowering, dead-head regularly, and feed every four weeks with a balanced organic rose food. Don't forget to deep water.

—Paul

## NEW ARRIVALS

### Anigozanthos cultivars

You may know them as Kangaroo Paws, native to open forests in Australia, they bear strikingly colorful furry flowers atop curved sword like leaves. Hummingbirds love 'em. Just make sure your soil drains well. Dwarf and tall varieties.

**4 inch pots**     **\$12.95**  
**#1 size cans**   **\$16.95 to \$22.95**

### Hemerocallis hybrids

Summertime is time for daylilies. Appropriately our selection peaks during these months. As *The Sunset Western Garden Book* says, "few plants are tougher, more persistent, or more trouble free. Daylilies adapt to almost any kind of soil." Over a dozen varieties are in stock at press time. From delicate pastels to intense and vibrant reds or oranges you are sure to find something to your liking.

**#1 size cans**     **\$12.95 to \$16.96**

### Alpine Strawberries

Fraises des bois, Wood Strawberries....whatever you call them, they are technically *Fragaria vesca*, and we call them *mmm, mmm, good*. Small, but unbelievably tasty fruits adorn these small plants. Six different varieties to choose from.

**4 inch pots**     **\$8.00**

### Hibiscus rosa-sinensis

Summer and fall are when these tropical beauties are in their glory. That said, we have seen flamboyant plants in full bloom in the Bay Area in December! Find a warm, sheltered location, a chaise lounge, a cold beverage, kick off your shoes and imagine yourself at the beach.

**#5 size cans**     **\$49.95 to \$54.95**



### X Mangave varieties

Crosses between Manfreda and Agave, these intergeneric hybrids are an exciting addition to the dry garden. Flexible leaves with red markings or spots, and soft teeth make them easy to handle. Check out 'Macho Mocha'!

**#2 size cans**     **\$59.95**



## Edible Patio Gardening

So you've run out of space to plant more vegetables & herbs in your garden. Or, like a lot of us folks in the area, you don't even have a yard to garden in. Container gardening could be the ideal solution for you, offering beautiful color and a tasty harvest of veggies, fruits, and herbs without the work of weeding. Some considerations before you start your patio garden are, irrigation, drainage, fertilizing, and size.

Most plants grown in containers need to be watered more often than those in the ground, especially veggies! For water reten-

tion and soil aeration, choose a potting or planting mix rich in organic matter. You could even add a little extra perlite to this mix. This will also make a normally heavy pot much easier to move around. And to avoid staining your deck or patio, place saucers under your containers.

Because you will be watering your container plants more often, they'll require more frequent feeding, especially veggies! Try watering with diluted fish emulsion, seaweed extract, or compost tea at least once a week, up to 2 weeks prior to harvesting. The growth rate and the size and shape of a plant's root

system will determine how big and deep the container should be. By mixing more than one type of plant in a pot, you can create a bountiful as well as beautiful container. Lower-growing colorful lettuces and herbs can complement taller growing plants like, peas, peppers, or even a dwarf fruit tree. Also, don't limit your choices to just veggies. Try adding some yummy fruits or colorful edible flowers.

Where I live, there will always be some rosemary, sage, and, hopefully, a small lemon tree near the BBQ!

Have Fun! —Che

# Creating a Miniature Water Garden

Are you limited by small space? Planning to move in the near future? Intrigued by water but not ready to commit to a backyard pond? Try a tub garden. Any container that can hold water can be made into a “bonsai” pond, complete with water plants, fish, or maybe a fountain.

Even a small 6” ceramic bowl can support a few floating plants, such as Water Lettuce or Frogbit. These floaters don’t need soil. A slightly larger bowl with room to submerge a 4” pot could also include an attractive vertical accent, like a small potted *Juncus* or *Acorus*. Lush, green, Parrot’s Feather will trail gracefully over the sides of the bowl. Large ceramic urns or water jugs can be planted with dramatic Papyrus or a tall, primitive *Equisetum*. A half wine barrel can hold a cornucopia of plants, including miniature water lilies, aquatic irises, floating four-leaf clover, or colorful bog flowers combined with stately rushes and reeds.

There are two ways to plant your container garden. The bottom of the tub can be filled with aquatic soil, and the plants removed from their pots and planted directly in the tub. Alternatively, the plants may stay in their original nursery pots, which can be submerged in the larger container with the rims covered by an inch or two of water. There are several advantages to this second method. It helps keep the plants smaller and less invasive, it makes cleaning the water much easier, and it allows you to make seasonal changes in your pond’s landscape. For instance, when the irises have finished blooming, their pots can be removed and stored elsewhere until

next spring, and replaced with a summer-blooming plant like *Lobelia cardinalis* or maybe a big showy Marsh Mallow. With either method, it is best to use aquatic soil that won’t float to the surface or rot in the water.

The best way to minimize algae growth in a small pond is to make sure 50% of the water’s surface is covered with plants. Some plants like Parrots Feather, are “oxygenators” that add oxygen and remove nitrogen from the water, which helps eliminate algae. If your container is small enough, changing the water is not such a big job. Adding a small submersible pump to keep the water moving can also help, and the sound is quite lovely and refreshing.

If you like, you can add a small fish or two. Call your county’s Mosquito Abatement District, and they will deliver mosquito fish, free of charge. If you live in a water district that adds chloramines to the water, you’ll have to add a product like DetoxMAX+ to neutralize the chloramines (which are not harmful to plants, only to animals with gills). You may also find that your little water garden is attracting an enjoyable variety of birds and butterflies.

If you’d like more ideas for miniature water gardens, stop by and visit the aquatic section at Berkeley Hort. We have many inspiring displays of water dishes, jars, bowls, and other containers of all shapes and sizes, filled with attractive arrangements of aquatic plants. This is a fun, easy, creative way to bring a little bit of nature onto your deck or patio this summer.



# Bearded Iris Tips

*Rhizomes available in August.*

Though they come in a great array of colors and sizes, all bearded Irises want good drainage, plenty of sun, and room to grow. For best results, newly planted rhizomes should be well-rooted before the growing season ends. This means a July through September planting season. (Stretch this to October if you have a particularly hot yard.) Pick a spot that receives at least a half-day of sun and provides well-drained soil. Irises are adaptable to most soils, so a slight slope or raised bed can be enough even with our heavy clay (although added humus is recommended).

Always plant Iris so that the top of the rhizome is exposed and the roots are spread out facing downward. It is a common mistake to plant too deeply. Leave space between the plants (usually 12 to 24 inches) so that you won’t have to dig up and divide the crowded rhizomes so frequently.

## THE GARDENER’S CALENDAR

### July Checklist

- › Mulch the soil around vegetable plants for water conservation.
- › Check your water garden to see that it is clear and free of mosquito larvae.
- › Tropical plants will benefit from extra feeding during these warm months.
- › Feed acid-loving plants with Cottonseed Meal or Fish Emulsion.
- › Deadhead and feed early-flowering perennials for a second bloom.

### August Checklist

- › Dig and divide Bearded Irises now (also check our selection).
- › Last chance for Summer Pruning of fruit trees.
- › Remove canes from Berry Plants that have already fruited (raspberries, etc.)
- › Include your garden when making vacation plans. What happens when you are away?
- › Deep-water winter/spring flowering shrubs, as now is when the buds are initiating.