

## Celebrating Citrus

**T**alk about plants with a history...over eight hundred years ago Chinese agriculturists described dozens of varieties of Citrus and detailed their care and culture. Theophrastus and Virgil mentioned citrus in their writings. Explorers from Europe brought seeds to the New World. Louis XIV erected an elegant orangerie to shelter his favorite plants. Father Serra planted them in mission gardens.

**Citrons** were the first citrus to reach the western world from their native India, appearing in Media and Persia about 300 B.C. So prized was this fruit in ancient times that one of the twelve labors assigned to Hercules was to obtain some of these "golden apples of the Hesperides". The large, oblong fruit has a penetrating and long lasting fragrance often used in salads or served with fish. They are known to be high in vitamin B. The peel is most often served candied.

From Spain and Italy come three different **Blood Oranges**, the most popular of the Mediterranean oranges because of the deep red coloring and sweet citrus flavor with a distinctive raspberry overtone. The aromatic **Mexican Limes** are as essential to bartenders as they are to Key lime pie. *Citrus grandis* is the appropriate botanical designation for the huge **Pummelo**; an important commercial

crop in the Far East. The 'Chandler' hybrid was developed at UC Riverside. The fruit is larger and sweeter than **Grapefruit** and the flowers have a rather interesting woody appearance.

Anyone who has traveled to the south of France will remember the incredible fragrance of the **Bitter Oranges** grown for the perfume industry. 'Bouquet de Fleurs' produces massive clusters of intensely aromatic white flowers followed by juicy sour oranges suitable for marmalade. For **Grapefruit** lovers, 'Oro Blanco' produces large, sweet fruit even in the Bay Area if you can provide plenty of sun and water. And with the lunar New Year coming up, consider the **Kumquats**; classic symbols of prosperity and good luck. The varieties 'Meiwa' and 'Nagami' are both highly ornamental and tasty treats right off the tree!

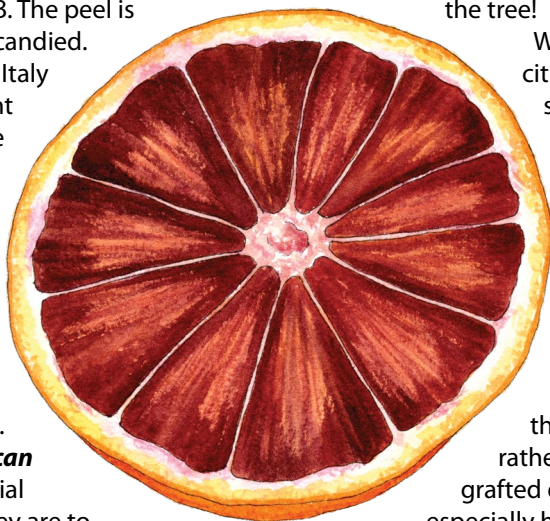
We offer varieties of citrus in dwarf and standard forms.

Almost any warm, sunny location will allow you to grow these fragrant, ornamental and often edible fruits.

Many citrus are everblooming in this area and all are rather easy to grow. The grafted dwarf forms are especially handsome in containers. Some can be grown indoors.

Come have a look at these versatile plants.

—Paul



## WEEKEND SPECIALS

Nov. 5-7

**Cyclamen**

4" pots ~ \$6.00 (reg. 7.95)

Nov. 12-14

**Gardner & Bloome  
Organic Fertilizer**

4 lb. bags ~ \$8.25 (reg. 10.99)

Nov. 19-21

**Conifers**

all sizes ~ 30% OFF

Nov. 26-28

**Bulbs**

all remaining varieties ~ 50% OFF

Dec. 3-5

**Wind Chimes**

all styles ~ 25% OFF

Dec. 10-12

**Winter Veggies**

cell packs (organic) ~ \$5.25 (reg. 7.00)

Dec. 17-19

**Books & Calendars**

all titles & subjects ~ 30% OFF

Dec. 24

**Indoor Plants & Orchids**

35% OFF

**Winter Hours** (as of November 7th): 8:30 am to 4:30 pm • Closed Thursdays

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

## NEW ARRIVALS

### Ceanothus 'Ray Hartman'

In the 1950's nurseryman Ray Hartman founded the Saratoga Horticultural Research Foundation in order to select and promote superior plants for CA landscapes. This was one of their first introductions, and it has stood the test of time! Medium blue flowers appear in late winter here. Versatile.

**#1 size cans \$19.95**  
**#5 size cans \$59.95 - \$64.95**

### Dwarf Conifers

Thinking of Bonsai, it occurs to us that many of you don't know about our great selection tiny trees. These include Pine, Cypress, Spruce, Fir, Juniper, Ginkgo, Larch, Metasequoia, and Cryptomeria among others. On your next visit to the nursery check out both the Conifers, and the Bonsai areas.

**4-inch pots \$12.95 - \$16.95**

### Leucospermum cordifolium hybrids

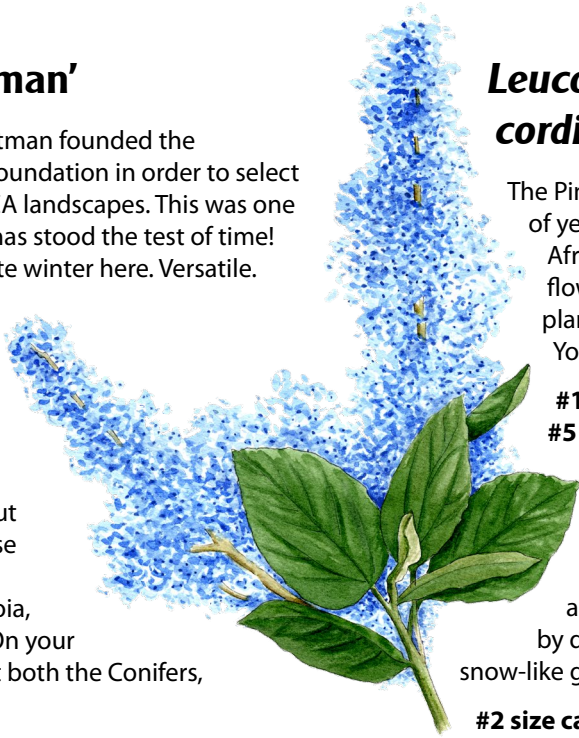
The Pincushion Proteas make quite a show at this time of year. Native to the Western Cape Province of South Africa, these evergreen shrubs provide showy cut flowers. If you want to adopt one of these special plants, ask us about their special requirements. You'll need full sun, good drainage, and acidic soil.

**#1 size cans \$36.95**  
**#5 size cans \$59.95 - \$89.95**

### Camellia sasanqua

These beauties bloom in fall or early winter around here. Delightful flowers end their show by dropping individual petals, leaving behind a snow-like ground covering. These are BHN staff favorites!

**#2 size cans \$39.95 - \$44.95**  
**#5 size cans \$64.95 - \$79.95**



## Help us celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

In 1997 this newsletter promised we'd have a grand celebration in 25 years. I remember clearly, saying that it would be a memorable bash, and that there would be festivities all year long. Well, the time is here and I plan to make good on that promise!

As the calendar rolls over to 2022 you can look forward these fun activities at Berkeley Horticultural Nursery:

- ⇒ **Monthly Raffles of cool gardening stuff** ⇒
- ⇒ **Free merchandise for shoppers on certain days** ⇒
- ⇒ **Exhibits by local artists** ⇒
- ⇒ **Live Music on our patio by a wide range of musicians** ⇒
- ⇒ **Gardening Demonstrations and Workshops** ⇒
- ⇒ **Kid's Day** ⇒
- ⇒ **Berkeley Hort Alumni Day** ⇒
- ⇒ **Food Trucks and Popups** ⇒
- ⇒ **Weekly on-stage performances in September and October** ⇒

All of this information is meant to whet your appetite, pique your curiosity, and get you thinking about visiting us frequently next year. For more details and updates keep reading our *Gardening Suggestions* newsletter.

Go to **berkeleyhort.com** and click on the **Stay Connected** link. —Paul

## Supply chain report from the Holiday Elf

*"Fast away the old year passes":*  
2022 calendars are here!

Garland and wreaths of Douglas Fir, and wreaths fashioned from Protea and Leucadendron foliage are expected to arrive at the nursery by late November. We'll also have our usual 'merry measure' of winter bedding plants—cyclamen, primrose, pansies and violas—as well as a super selection of indoor plants and (fingers crossed) some exceptionally festive varieties of poinsettia. And although spring-blooming bulbs typically sell out very quickly, we do hope to have a good supply through November, including paperwhite narcissus, hyacinth, daffodils, freesia, crocus, tulips, and the Giant Dutch Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*).

Happy Winter!

—H. Elf

# THE GARDENER'S CALENDAR

## November Checklist

- Cut back floppy or overgrown perennials.
- Last chance for spring-flowering bulb planting (check your fridge).
- Plant winter annuals: Poppies, Stock, Sweet Peas, Pansies, Violas, and Primroses.
- Apply an organic plant food for slow release of nutrients.
- Be vigilant for cool weather weeds like bluegrass and oxalis.

## December Checklist

- Deadhead (remove spent flowers from) Chrysanthemums.
- Clean and organize your garden tools.
- Give Cymbidium orchids bloom food.
- Sow wildflower seeds.
- Turn that compost!
- Plant green manure (cover crops) in your vegetable plot.

## YEAR-END AT BERKELEY HORT

We will be open until noon on Friday, December 24 for your last-minute shopping convenience. There will be plenty of holiday gift ideas, including some deep discounts on all of our indoor plants and orchids. Then, we will close for our annual winter nap until Monday, January 3rd, 2022. Cheers!

## How sweet it is

If you are planning to offer bowls of fragrant forced Paperwhite Narcissus as gifts or holiday decoration (excellent for decking-the-halls combined with poinsettias and evergreens) remember to allow 3-4 weeks lead time before show time. Look for bulbs that are firm and large. Bigger is definitely better when it comes to *Narcissus* (and other) bulbs—the larger the bulb, the more flowering stalks it will produce.

Pour about an inch of pebbles into the bottom of a bowl at least 3" deep and 5" in diameter, then pack in as many bulbs as the bowl will accommodate, spacing the bulbs about ¼" apart. Add more pebbles around and between the bulbs to cover at least the lower ⅔ — the roots your Paperwhites will produce are strong enough to push the bulbs right out of

the bowls if you don't. Fill the bowl with water up to but not touching the bottom of the bulbs. Roots will grow down into the water, and if the bulbs are in direct contact with moisture they will rot long before they bloom.

Place the bowl in a cool, bright room, check the water level every few days, and expect flowers in about a month. To keep floppy foliage to a minimum, try this firewater formula developed by researchers at Cornell University. Start your bulbs with regular tap water. Once roots have developed and stems are about 2" tall, replace the water in the bowl with a solution of one part 80 proof liquor (rotgut gin or vodka works beautifully) to seven parts water. Use this mixture to top off your bowls as necessary for as long as they flower. Salut!

## THE SEED CORNER

It may be cold out, but it's not too late to give something back to your garden by planting a cover crop. Cover crops will give your soil that extra boost before you begin planting in spring.

**Fava Beans** ~ Fava beans accumulate large quantities of nitrogen, which is available to subsequent crops. They have deep taproots that help open up heavy, compacted soils. The leaves decompose quickly but the stems break down slower and help to loosen clay soil. You can eat the beans in spring. We also sell the broad bean, which is the favored edible Fava variety.

**Annual Ryegrass** ~ Ryegrass is quick to germinate and is very vigorous. It grows well in our Bay Area clay and can tolerate wet soil. In the spring, mow or till it under, then the

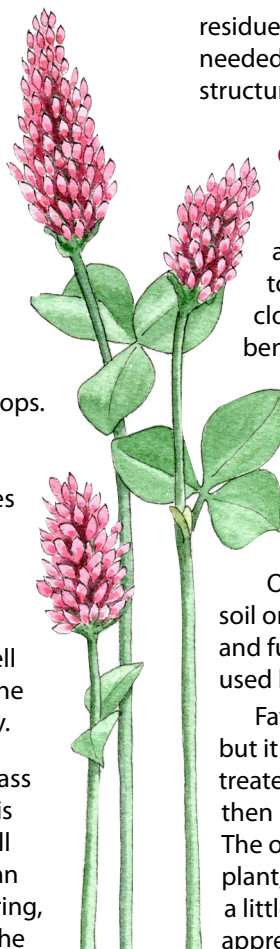
residue breaks down quickly adding needed organic material to improve soil structure and drainage.

**Crimson Clover** ~ Crimson clover also fixes nitrogen (the process of making N available to the roots) and produces lots of great humus to work back into the soil. Crimson clover is beautiful and is a great beneficial insect attractant.

These winter cover crops not only add nitrogen and organic material to your soil, but they also protect the soil from erosion and help control weed seed germination and growth.

Organic matter will help beneficial soil organisms such as earthworms and fungi. Their by-products are in turn used by other organisms in the soil.

Fava beans take a little more work but it is worth it. They should be treated with a bacterial inoculant and then poked-in about 1½ inches deep. The other cover crops are fairly easy to plant, just spread the seeds and rake a little soil over them. Your soil will appreciate it.





# The Blueberry: An American native

Blueberries of the genus *Vaccinium* are truly a Native American species. These plants are believed to be one of the first edible fruit bearing plants to be discovered by early peoples after the last ice age. The wild plants can be found in many different environments from Mexico, northward to Arctic plains. Some varieties were even discovered in parts of South America.

Native American people used the berries and plants for food and medicinal purposes for centuries. They cherished blueberries and much folklore developed around them. The blossom end of each berry, the calyx, forms the shape of a perfect five-pointed star; the elders of the tribe told of how the Great Spirit sent "star berries" to relieve the children's hunger during a famine.

It is said that Native Americans gave blueberries to the pilgrims, helping them make it through their first winter. These early settlers were delighted to discover their benefits and incorporate them into their regular diets.

A favorite dish of the Native American was *Sautauthig* (pronounced sawi-taw-teeg), a simple pudding made with blueberries, cracked corn and water. Later, the settlers added milk, butter and

sugar when they were available. The Pilgrims loved *Sautauthig* and it is believed by historians that it was part of the first Thanksgiving feast.

In the past century researchers have cultivated blueberries to produce today's modern "highbush" varieties. These varieties have been enhanced to offer magnificent plump berries with deep, rich color and a delicious fruity flavor (what we find in our markets today). North America is currently the world's leading blueberry producer, accounting for nearly 90% of world production.

Here at BHN we love growing blueberries for eating and ornamental use year round. Because they're so adaptable many varieties thrive in our unique climate. You too can enjoy growing, harvesting and EATING fresh blueberries by simply providing them with good sunlight, rich acidic soil and consistent water. This winter we are excited to offer another great selection of these delicious and healthy treats, including 'Pink Lemonade' and 'Jewel'. Give us a call, check our website, or come in for a list and descriptions of the different varieties we'll be selling in January. —Che

## The Patio Pond

An enduring attraction here at Berkeley Hort is the Koi Pond that runs along one side of the Aquatic Plants section. Built in the mid-1990's, the original idea for the pond was to showcase aquatic plants (though, truth be told, the motivation for building the pond was to fill a large empty spot created when a creaky, old greenhouse was demolished). Pond plants remain popular, but the real draw to the Aquatic Plants section for most folks is the collection of koi fish.

Generations of customers have delighted in watching the colorful koi swim about. Curious kids and kids-at-heart can hardly resist the temptation to join them, especially on sweltering days. (But, please, don't! Stay out of the pond and don't touch the water, so we can protect the koi's ecosystem. Also, we ask that you don't climb, sit or stand on pond's edge, for your own safety as well as that of the fish.)

Eavesdropping from the office, I enjoy hearing adult customers chat amongst themselves as they humor their children, sharing stories from their youthful visits to the koi pond with their own parents, years ago. Sharing common histories and repeating traditions can be effective balms

that soothe the inevitable scars of life. It is immensely gratifying to be part of so many peoples' good childhood memories! And when I hear this generation of kids talking to the fish, I am assured that this tradition will continue well into the future.

Sometimes, if you arrive at the nursery early in the morning, you can catch the yard crew feeding the koi fish. Sometimes, little ones are even invited to help toss fish food pellets onto the water's surface. The fish gulp and gobble with glee, their little mouths popping open at the surface, almost like they are giving the kids air

kisses. So charming! I've seen kids' eyes open almost as big as dinner-plate dahlias upon seeing the fish shoot up to the surface, mouths agape, hoping for just one more bite.

We don't know exactly how many koi there are. There are at least 20, and maybe 35. That big fish, the white one, is thought to be at least 20 years old. Surprisingly, Berkeley Hort didn't always have koi fish. The first ones were a donation from a customer who left the area and couldn't keep them. The big white one may be an original from that donation! —Amy

