

BERKELEY HORTICULTURAL NURSERY

GARDENING SUGGESTIONS

Jan | Feb
2022



Ready, Set, Go! This year marks our 100th Anniversary and we have lots of things planned. You have waited patiently. We have been working on the details. Now you can be part of the celebration. Mark your 2022 calendar now. This will be fun. Come see what's happening!

Starting with free classes we will offer demonstrations on both Fruit Tree Pruning and Rose

Pruning during these winter months. See our **Free Classes** on the next page of this newsletter for dates and times.

And each month this year we will give away FREE merchandise on select days. As a preview for the first 4 months check out the box above.

Then watch for one-of-a-kind Raffle

January 21st
2 FREE **Bareroot Strawberry plants**
for the first 100 shoppers.

February 14th
One FREE **Hemp Shopping Bag**
for the first 100 shoppers
(min. \$50 purchase).

March 15th
One FREE **Tillandsia** (Bromeliad)
plant for the first 100 shoppers.

April 13th
One FREE **Seed Tin of
Mexican Sunflowers**
for the first 100 shoppers.

Items (this means FREE, but you'll need to enter for a chance to win). We'll post descriptions and pics as well as dates on our website and social media so you can plan ahead.

As the weather begins to warm up look (listen) for live music on our patio on Saturdays. Classical duos and trios, acoustic string bands, jazz, solo guitar, and much more. We will post a schedule online and in the nursery so

you can plan ahead.

I'm getting ahead of myself here but starting in late spring and going through the summer we plan to have catered food and/or food trucks inside the nursery on selected weekends.

All in all, it should be a grand time.

—Paul

WEEKEND SPECIALS

Jan. 7-9
Sluggo Bait
All sizes ~ 20% OFF

Jan. 14-16
Primroses
Jumbo 6 packs ~ \$5.00 *reg. 6.95*

Jan. 21-23
E.B. Stone Organics Fertilizers
4 lb. box ~ \$8.75 *reg. 11.99*

Jan. 28-30
Azaleas
#1 size cans ~ 30% OFF

Feb. 4-6
Camellias
#5 size cans ~ 30% OFF

Feb. 11-13
Vegetable Seeds
all varieties ~ 25% OFF

Feb. 18-20
E.B. Stone Fish Emulsion
1 quart size ~ \$11.25 *reg. 14.99*

Feb. 25-27
Bareroot Plants
trees & shrubs ~ 30% OFF

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

Winter Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm • Closed Thursdays

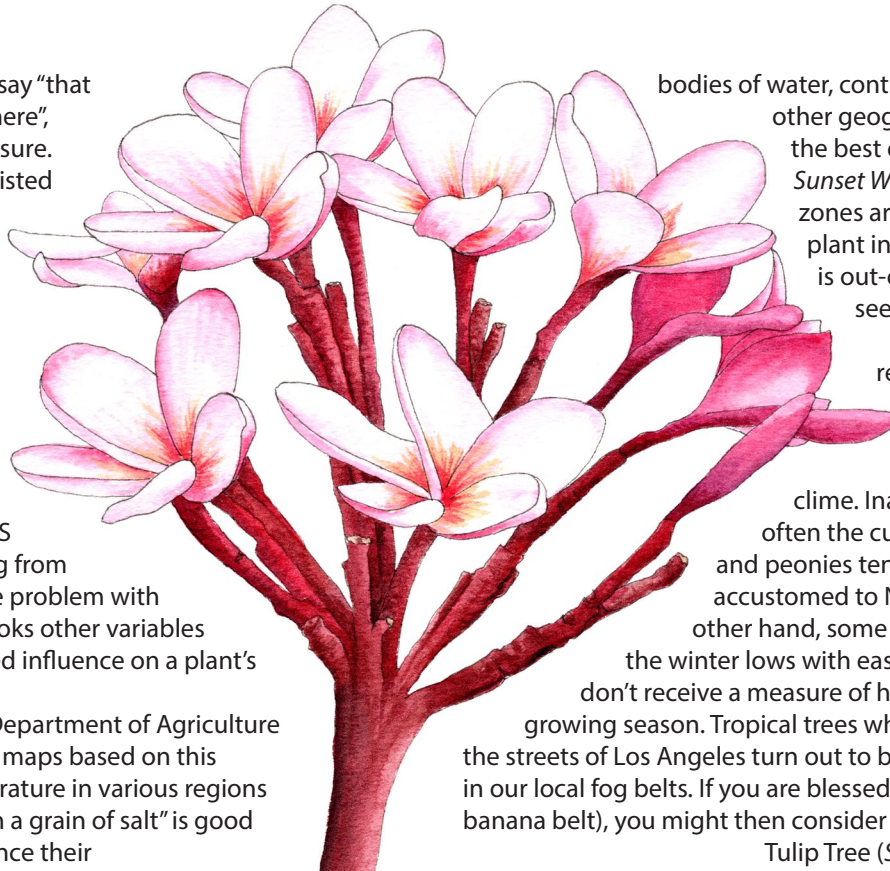
We will be closed on Monday, January 17 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

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Planting zones; pushing the limits?

When I hear someone say “that won’t grow around here”, I ask myself why they’re so sure. Among the many reasons listed in garden reference books is **hardiness**, a label based on a subjective analysis of just how cold the air can be before a plant dies or sustains serious damage. A little bit of cruel experimentation and we calculate the limiting factor or PLANT HARDINESS RATING for almost anything from fuchsias to blueberries. The problem with this system is that it overlooks other variables which might have a decided influence on a plant’s cold tolerance.

The people at the U.S. Department of Agriculture have assembled a series of maps based on this minimum expected temperature in various regions of the country. “Take it with a grain of salt” is good advice to map followers, since their data were collected over only the past 140 years or so (not a long time in the scope of natural history). Maps published in local gardening books are quite a bit better since they include more detailed information based on soil, latitude, elevation,



bodies of water, continental air masses, and other geographical influences. Sadly, the best example of this **was** the *Sunset Western Garden Book* (whose zones are used on our nursery plant information cards), which is out-of-print, and no revival seems likely.

East Coasters will recognize that many of their most glorious flowering shrubs are less than spectacular in our milder climate. Inadequate winter chilling is often the culprit here. Forsythias, lilacs, and peonies tend to disappoint those accustomed to New York gardens. On the other hand, some species might withstand the winter lows with ease, yet never thrive if they don’t receive a measure of heat during their peak growing season. Tropical trees which you might see along the streets of Los Angeles turn out to be mere twigs when grown in our local fog belts. If you are blessed with a warm garden (a banana belt), you might then consider the flamboyant African Tulip Tree (*Spathodea*), *Erythrina*, or even *Plumeria* for garden-fresh leis.

Our diversity of microclimates is what makes Bay Area gardening so exciting. Embrace this wholeheartedly but be prepared for a few disappointments along the way.

—Paul

“The flowers did hang their heads, because they had been dancing all night and were very tired...”

—Hans Christian Anderson

Fescue to the rescue! Seeds of native grasses prevent bank failures

Hillside gardeners do your part to stabilize the banks—sow seed of California native grasses to help prevent soil erosion. November through March is the best time to plant as seedlings take advantage of winter rains to grow their extensive, soil-knitting, root systems.

Consider sowing seed of *Festuca rubra*, the Creeping Red Fescue. This native bunchgrass has rich green flowing blades and makes a lumpy naturalistic lawn. It is especially well-suited for shady slopes. Drought tolerant once established.

Another ornamental species to consider is *Festuca idahoensis*, the Idaho Fescue. Slightly more robust, and preferring full sun, its blue-green foliage grows from 1 to 2 feet high and equally wide. The larval food plant for Lindsey’s Skipper Butterfly, its leaves stand out dramatically against contrasting garden plants in shades of red or silver.

Both these species plus a dozen or so other native grasses are available in seed packs at \$7.99 each.

Free Classes at BHN

Saturdays at 10:00 a.m.

Rose Pruning

Brush up on your pruning skills for all styles of roses.

January 15th

(To repeat on February 12th if needed.)

Fruit Tree Pruning

We’ll focus on how to keep your fruit tree at a manageable size.

January 22nd

(To repeat on February 19th if needed.)

NEW ARRIVALS

Flowering Quince (*Chaenomeles*)

Because they tend to bloom more reliably during the time of celebration in the Bay Area, Red Quince blossoms (believed to bring good luck & prosperity in the home), have taken the place of the Peach & Plum blossoms that are typically used in China. A hardy and beautiful plant to bring into your garden.

#5 size cans \$59.95 each

Bareroot Strawberry Plants

Over a decade ago we collaborated with a Certified Organic grower, who closed up after only 3 seasons. Now they are back! We are pleased to announce the return of these tasty treasures. (See article on next page.)

Bareroot Plants \$1.95 each

Fiber Pot Roses

Typically we receive the largest selection of Roses in the spring. To avoid a predicted lack of availability and high shipping costs in 2022, we've decided to bring in the bulk of our Rose selection early this season from Star Roses. You will find a whopping 65+ varieties!

Fiber Pot(s) \$46.95 each

Arctostaphylos sp.

The Manzanita ("little apple" in Spanish, for the small red berries that they produce) truly represents the beauty, diversity and toughness of a California Native. They can be found from coastal bluffs & inland valleys, to our cold Sierra Mountains. They can be low, sprawling shrubs or unique small trees. We love the smooth red bark and the beautiful bell-shaped blossoms.

#1 size pots \$16.95-\$19.95

Kung Hei Fat Choy

Tuesday, February 1 is the first day of the Chinese New Year. The Lunar New Year celebration lasts 15 days and ends on the first full moon after the Spring Festival. This is the year of the Tiger. Tigers were born in the years 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010 and 2022 and are known as courageous and active people who love a good challenge and adventure in life.

During Chinese New Year it is traditional to give children and young adults that are

not married, a red envelope with money inside. The red envelopes are wishes for another safe and peaceful year. If you are giving a gift to an adult, Berkeley Hort can help you with that. Some plants that are special for the Chinese New Year, are Red Flowering Quince (*Chaenomeles*), *Osmanthus fragrans*, Orange (*Citrus*) and Camellia varieties. The color red signifies happiness, passion and good luck, so any plant with red flowers would make a perfect gift. Finally, any long-lasting flowers such as orchids are a **great** choice.



Vegetables for late winter harvests

Winter in the Bay Area is obviously not the ideal time to plant beans, tomatoes or squash, but our cool months of January through March are a fine time to grow many other vegetables, according to Pam Peirce, author of the classic guide *Golden Gate Gardening*.

During this cool season, she recommends sowing seeds of snap peas, spinach, bulb onions, leeks, carrots, and radishes directly in the soil, and planting out starts of other veggies, e.g., lettuce, broccoli, and collards.

Both seeds and starts will appreciate a sunny spot or at least reasonably bright light, soil that's been freshly amended with compost and organic fertilizer, and protection from hard frosts. A late winter harvest of fresh produce will be your reward!

You can find *Golden Gate Gardening* \$32.00, on the breezeway bookshelf.

Back to organic!

Berkeley Hort has been selling bare-root strawberries for many years now. Shortly after being hired in 2005, I was given the opportunity to order our bareroot strawberry plants. In winter, there is usually a good selection of different varieties, and in bare root form they are much less expensive than when potted-up & fully grown in spring and summer. I was surprised to find out that, unfortunately, there were no sources for *organically grown* bareroot strawberry starts available for us to offer to customers. All growers were growing them conventionally, using fungicides & pesticides to treat the soil for disease and pests. Of course, we can buy organic strawberries from the market from large growers like Driscoll's but they have patent rights to the berry varieties they sell, prohibiting anyone else from growing them.

After some research, the following year, I was able to find an ORGANIC grower for us! James Rickert had started a certified organic nursery in Macdoel, CA. His goal was to provide commercial growers with a reliable source of certified organic strawberry starts. He was able to take advantage of the large, **untreated**, acreage of his family's free-range, grass-fed cattle ranch, Prather Ranch. At the time, they were pricier than conventionally grown bareroot strawberries, but we decided that despite the cost, we had to take the opportunity to offer them organically grown to our customers. When I contacted James the next year, he

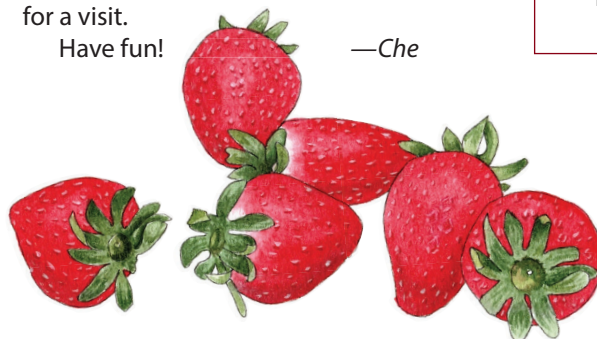
informed me that due to a low demand from commercial growers, he had to end his venture.

Well, he's back! Early last year I was searching around again for an organic source, and James' name popped up. Apparently, in 2016 he partnered with Daniel Nelson to start ION (Innovative Organic Nursery, LLC). Following a few years of research, they've successfully created an innovative technique for growing strawberries organically on a scale to supply commercial organic growers & us "little" nurseries! Their methods include Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation, steam sterilization and incorporating beneficial insects and plants on their growing grounds.

As we all know, the demand for organic berries at markets is definitely up, so we are all pulling for Dan & James' efforts with ION to be a growing success!

We are offering 4 different *organically grown* bare root strawberries: 'Albion', 'Cabrillo', 'Chandler' and 'Monterey'. Please check our website for descriptions of these varieties as well as many other yummy fruit choices! Feel free to call or come in for a visit.

Have fun! —Che



THE GARDENER'S CALENDAR

January Checklist

- › Plant cool weather veggies like Cauliflower, Broccoli, Collards, Kale and leaf crops.
- › Check your compost to make sure it isn't too wet or too dry.
- › Spend a Saturday morning cleaning and reconditioning garden tools.
- › Repot container plants that have gone 2 years or more in the same pot.
- › Get a jump on planting CA natives like *Ceanothus* or *Arctostaphylos*.
- › Prune Roses.

February Checklist

- › Plant summer flowering bulbs like Begonias, Gladiolus, Lilies and Dahlias.
- › Turn in cover crops or green manure.
- › Finish pruning perennials.
- › Last chance for direct seeding of annuals.
- › Select winter flowering shrubs such as *Forsythia*, *Chaenomeles*, and *Syringa*.
- › Bareroot berries are a bargain: Strawberries, Blueberries, and Raspberries.

