



Garden Notes

"Creating edible and ornamental gardens"

www.claremontgardenclub.org

info@claremontgardenclub.org

December 2019

Welcome to the Claremont Garden Club newsletter!

🐦 Please send us questions, photos, ideas about gardening

Bird's nest fern (*Asplenium nidus*)



You can find this almost everywhere that houseplants are sold. Unlike what most of us think of as ferns, the fronds are not divided into leaflets. These plants are sold in potting soil and are happy in it, but are actually epiphytes like staghorn ferns, and will grow on boards. They are frost-sensitive, but I've had several growing outdoors in sheltered spots for a number of years.

Plants start out small but leaves on mature specimens can be three feet long. They like regular water but can tolerate brief dry spells, and need dappled shade—too much light burns the leaves. They are lovely houseplants, but dry air will cause brown areas. (The purple leaves are from *Oxalis triangularis*)

December Potluck: Everyone is invited to join us for our annual winter gathering on December 11 at 6:30 pm. Let us know if you'd like to come and we will send you the address.

Cyclamen persicum

One of the season's cheeriest plants, florist cyclamen does well inside and out in our area. It likes a fair amount of shade and regular water, as long as the tuber doesn't stay wet. Although [received wisdom](#) says they need a summer dormant period, I bought the one pictured several years ago and kept it inside in a north-facing window; it kept its foliage and almost always has a few blooms. After I noticed some aphids on the leaves, I put it outside and it is now pest-free without any effort on my part.



Autumn color

Now is a great time to check out the trees and shrubs that contribute autumn color to our gardens. Some that are usually lovely are crape myrtle, pistasche, pomegranate, Japanese maples; deciduous fruit trees often provide a good display too.

Ornamental of the Month

Heteromeles arbutifolia



Toyon is one of our best local native evergreen shrubs. Slow-growing to about 12 ft tall and wide, happy in full sun to part shade, very low to moderate water. AKA "California holly", it is supposedly the plant for which Hollywood was named. Clusters of small white flowers in summer are followed by bright red berries in fall. Pollinators love the blossoms; birds love the berries. (Photo taken at [Bernard Field Station](#))

Edible of the Month

Cucurbita pepo subsp *pepo*



There are a lot of squash varieties--this is one of the winter ones known as a "[spaghetti squash](#)". Once cooked, the solid flesh separates into strands that can be used like the pasta. High in nutrition, low in calories; many [ways to use](#). Sun, warm soil, regular water with good drainage; may cross-pollinate with zucchini. Growing [info here](#). (Photo from [Hardy Plant Society](#))

Liquidambar are beautiful trees, but are now subject to [bacterial leaf scorch](#). Why the colors? The green from chlorophyll usually covers the yellow (carotenoid and xanthophyll) and red (anthocyanin) pigments that leaves may have, and when that breaks down as the leaves on deciduous trees and shrubs die, the other colors become visible.

Fig wasp



I recently broke open a fig on a volunteer plant (tho it looked plump and purple like my edible figs, the fruit was dry and unappealing as is the case with most fig volunteers). I was delighted to find a small, black [fig wasp](#) inside. Although many of the cultivated figs around here

are varieties that don't require a wasp to pollinate them (they produce a fruit with sterile seeds without the need for fertilization), this plant seems to have attracted one.

Favorite Quote

"A garden is a complex of aesthetic and plastic intentions; and the plant is, to a landscape artist, not only a plant – rare, unusual, ordinary or doomed to disappearance – but it is also a color, a shape, a volume or an arabesque in itself."

Roberto Burle Marx

Juvenile vs Adult Foliage



Gardeners are used to the leaves of very young seedlings looking different from the mature plant, but in some [the change](#) occurs much later in life. This [Dazygotheca elegantissima](#) at the Huntington shows mostly thin-lobed, jagged-edged, dark green juvenile foliage but is starting to grow some broader, lighter green adult leaves as the plant grows into more light.

Upcoming events and more

Dec 11: Garden Club Winter Potluck – 6:30- to whenever we run out of stuff to talk about; email for location

Dec 28: Tour of Ontario Museum garden, 11am, free but call to reserve space (909) 395-2510

Jan 8: Garden Club–6:30-8:30, Napier Center, **"Greywater 101"**

Smart Gardening Workshops: 9:30-11 am, free. For dates and locations, see http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/sg/wk_schds.cfm

Chino Basin Water District: classes on waterwise landscaping, irrigation; mulch giveaways: <http://www.cbwcd.org/150/Workshop-Descriptions>

Armstrong classes: <http://www.armstronggarden.com/pages/classes>

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden: www.rsabg.org/upcoming-events

Huntington Library: Free talks, plant sales www.huntington.org/

LA Arboretum: Plant shows and sales <https://www.arboretum.org>

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: "elegantissima" means "elegant"; "arbutifolia" means having leaves like the strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*)

Plant miscellanea: "Parthenocarp" is the development of a fruit without fertilization. The fruit has no seeds or sterile seeds. This occurs in varieties of fig, banana, pineapple, grape, orange, etc

Things to do in December

General

- ✓ Clean and sharpen garden tools
- ✓ Make notes about this year's successes and failures

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Water stress damages plants so reduce but don't stop irrigation if rains are rare
- ✓ Consider feeding birds who will eat next year's pests; plant berried shrubs

Edibles

- ✓ Start chard, lettuce, spinach, mustard, radishes, onions, parsley, peas
- ✓ Transplant artichokes, cole crops, berries, when soil isn't waterlogged
- ✓ Plant asparagus at different levels to prolong harvest
- ✓ Prune fruit trees and vines after leaves fall

Ornamentals

- ✓ Sow most annuals including wildflowers
- ✓ Transplant Iceland and Shirley poppies, azaleas, camellias, pansies, ornamental cabbage
- ✓ If your soil is heavy and stays wet, lift begonias, gladioli, dahlias, let dry a day, clean gently, store dry/dark
- ✓ If frost predicted, cover subtropicals and succulents with cardboard boxes or sheets held away from plants

Please send photos and info about plants you've grown, gardens to visit, gardening lore, questions. Sue Schenk, editor

The Metropolitan Water District usually offers rebates for turf removal: <http://socalwatersmart.com/index.php/>

Facebook: [Claremont Garden Club](#)
Instagram: [Claremont_Garden_Club](#)