



Garden Notes

"Creating edible and ornamental gardens"

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Welcome to the Claremont Garden Club newsletter!

🐞 Please send us questions and ideas about gardening



Moorten Garden

A Palm Springs [garden](#) definitely worth a visit. Established by one of the original Keystone

Kops, it's small but full of interesting cacti and succulents, many of which are identified with their names etched on pieces of rock. There is also a small greenhouse with some fascinating plants.

Riverside Home and Garden Show

This was disappointing. Mostly home stuff, with some outdoor furniture exhibits. Very few live plants but three artificial turf vendors!

There was, however, a booth for [Moon Valley Nursery](#) showcasing some impressively large trees and shrubs. We are looking forward to the Garden Club visit to their La Verne location on February 23—let us know if you'd like to come.



Anyone know if these are mycorrhizal?!

Mycorrhizal Fungi

[Most of these fungi](#) have a mutualistic (beneficial to both) relationship with plant roots. "Why?" you might ask. Well, although plants usually produce an extensive, branched, system of roots with root hairs at the tips to increase absorption, they often do better with some help in acquiring the water and minerals they need, and mycorrhizal

fungi do that. What do the fungi get? The energy-producing sugars and other products that plants create (a few species are parasitic and don't give the plant anything).

These fungi create an extensive threadlike network of cells (a "mycelium") that grows throughout the soil, absorbing water and the nutrients it contains. One type covers the outside of roots and the other type penetrates them. Over 90% of plant families form these associations (brassicas are one group that

Ornamental of the Month

Aspidistra elatior



One of the toughest plants for indoors and out is the "[cast iron plant](#)", a favorite since Victorian times. It slowly forms clumps of dark green leaves up to 2 ½ ft long that rise from rhizomes as in irises. Needs good drainage, thrives in shade, tolerates low water and dry air, frost hardy. Small cream and purple flowers sometimes appear at ground level in late winter. A few varieties with white spots or stripes on the leaves are sometimes available.

Edible of the Month

Physalis philadelphica, P. ixocarpa



[Tomatillos](#) are an annual plant native to Mexico and Central America. They like full sun, good drainage, fertile soil, and regular water and tolerate light frost. They can reach 6 ft tall so should be staked, and one plant can produce as many as 200 fruits. These are ready to be harvested when the green fruit fills its papery husk. They can be stored in the refrigerator for several weeks. [Good cooked in dishes or raw in salsa.](#)

doesn't). Some plants only coordinate with one species of fungus (or vice versa), but others may coordinate with a dozen or more. In orchids, these fungi are necessary even to allow seeds to germinate.

Understanding of the different forms of these relationships is a work in progress. The mycelium extends well beyond the root system of a plant, and the fungal cells can not only extract needed minerals from the soil, but break down materials to release these nutrients to be transported to the plant. Mycelia can even connect plants together and facilitate the movement of water, minerals, and carbon between them. Mycorrhizal fungi also seem to provide some protection for plants from soil-borne pathogens, and from the effects of drought, high salinity, and metal toxicity. There is even evidence that they can produce volatile compounds when a plant is attacked by insects that can move to connected plants and help them resist similar attack.

Most soils have plenty of these fungi in them but digging the soil up can disrupt the mycelial network so it's best to create as little disturbance as possible. Compost or mulch placed on the surface of the soil will work its way down without digging. Every so often the mycelium will produce mushrooms and spores to spread the fungus around through the air. Bags of purchased mycorrhizal fungus may or may not have the species necessary for your plants but if your soil is very poor or has been sterilized, you might want to give it a try anyway, or find a source of better soil and spread it around to inoculate yours.



Help Monarch Butterflies—Plant Some Native Milkweeds!

A recent count by the [Xerces Society](#) shows an alarming decrease in the number of Monarchs overwintering in California. Baker Creek Seeds has posted [recent information](#) and a [video](#). The adults are not choosy about the source of the nectar they drink, but larvae a limited to milkweeds. Check out our local [Grow Native Nursery](#) for

milkweeds as well as the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#). The tropical milkweeds found at most nurseries work too but natives are preferred.

Upcoming events and more

Feb 10: RSABG free day for Claremont residents

Feb 13: Garden Club – 6:30-8:30 pm, talk at 7pm, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, Claremont. **“Decorating the Garden: Yard art!”**

Mar 29/30: Flower Show ([details on GC website](#))

Mar 30: Arbor Day celebration ([details](#))

Apr 14: “Claremont Eclectic: A tour of six local gardens” ([details](#))

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

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: “Aspidistra” comes from the Greek “aspidon” meaning “a shield”; “elator” means “taller”

Plant miscellanea: The papery husk around the tomatillo fruit is one form of the calyx, the collective name for the (usually green) sepals which protect buds and, in this case, the developing fruit

Things to do in February

General

- ✓ Plan changes to the garden
- ✓ Order seeds and plants, visit nurseries
- ✓ Stay off wet soil to avoid compaction
- ✓ Wait til new growth starts to prune off cold-damaged branches

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Pick up dropped camellia flowers to reduce petal blight
- ✓ Spray dusty citrus trees with 1T dishwashing liquid per gallon water
- ✓ Prune fruit trees away from ground or other plants to keep ants off

Edibles

- ✓ Avoid pesticides which can kill your crop pollinators
- ✓ Plant winter vegetables, mesclun, asparagus, last bare-root trees
- ✓ Fertilize cane berries, citrus, avocados

Ornamentals

- ✓ Choose and plant clivias, camellias, deciduous magnolias while blooming
- ✓ Fertilize roses after new leaves unfurl
- ✓ Cut back fuschias when new growth appears, then fertilize
- ✓ Cut off stems of ginger that have bloomed or plant will languish
- ✓ Cut back woody and overgrown perennials that show new basal growth (but not spring-bloomers)
- ✓ Divide perennials when they start to grow again

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

The Metropolitan Water District is currently offering rebates for turf removal. <http://socialwatersmart.com/index.php/>

Facebook: [Claremont Garden Club](#)

Instagram: [Claremont_Garden_Club](#)