



Garden Notes

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Welcome to the Claremont Garden Club newsletter!

🐝 Please send us questions, photos, ideas about gardening



Bee Swarm When a colony has outgrown the space in its hive, it will start production of a set of new queens. Before these hatch, the old queen will set off with about half the bees in the hive, creating a swarm which will fly off in search of a new home. The first of the new queens to hatch will usually kill the others and take over the original hive, but sometimes she will also fly off with half of those bees left. The swarm will attach itself to someplace safe temporarily while it sends out scouts

to locate nearby possibilities for a new home. The swarm decides on the best one and flies off to it. If you see a swarm like the one in the photo (courtesy of Patty Lindberg), you don't need to do anything as they will leave soon, usually within a day or so. If they find what they hope is a permanent home in your garden, you might want to contact a bee removal service to relocate them. Two possibilities are [Family Bees](#) and the list at [LA County Beekeepers](#).

Summer Potluck!

Join us on July 10 for good food and fun—just send us an email letting us know you plan to come!

Reversion to green leaves: Most leaves are some version of green since chlorophyll, the main pigment in leaves, captures red and blue light energy, leaving green light for us to see. However, sometimes when the cells in a leaf are being produced, there is a mutation that affects chlorophyll production, and these areas can appear lighter green, yellow, or white. Often a plant breeder will cut off a branch where this sort of "sport" appears, root it or graft it onto a rootstock, and put it into nursery production for the public to buy. Beauties like the elderberry at far right and the



Ornamental of the Month

Aquilegia chrysantha



[Golden Columbine](#) is native to much of the western US. A perennial which grows 1-4ft tall and a foot or two wide, It prefers light to moderate shade and moderate water. Bloom time is spring to mid-summer and the plants will naturalize if happy. Attracts hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. Plants pretty much die down in fall, so mark where they are.

Edible of the Month

Sambucus nigra 'Madonna'



This variety of black elderberry has lovely yellow-variegated leaves. A deciduous shrub growing up to 6 ft tall and wide, it prefers light shade (burns in too much sun and loses variegation in too much shade) and regular water. Fairly slow-growing and easy to prune to keep small. Masses of tiny white flowers in summer turn into black berries which birds love. These are edible if cooked. (Related to our native *S. mexicana*, but a European species.)

euonymus above left can really light up garden beds. However, because the leaves have less chlorophyll, the plants capture less light energy and so usually grow more slowly than their all-green cousins. In addition, as new branches and leaves are produced, there is a tendency for mutations to occur that increase chlorophyll content, resulting in a loss of variegation. Some plants are more likely to do this than others. These green parts will grow more vigorously than the variegated shoots and eventually crowd them out unless you keep them pruned out, so be vigilant!

Evening primrose and sphinx moth caterpillar



([*Oenothera biennis*](#) and [*Hyles lineata*](#))

Lesser goldfinches love to sit on the stalks of tall evening primrose and eat the black seeds. This is reason enough to let them sow themselves around the garden, but I have another reason: each stalk now has at least one white-lined sphinx moth caterpillar munching it. Some are green like this one and some are the dark form. Fun to watch and I keep hoping to see the adults!

Fire Season is Here: If you live near natural areas with lots of plants that dry out in the summer, take a look at [the methods and plants that CalFire suggests](#) to help protect your home.

Storing Carbon:

We hear a lot about carbon storage by forests, but our gardens can do a lot for this as well as long as we follow some rules:

- **Minimize digging:** breaking up the soil releases the carbon dioxide it stores
- **Minimize annuals:** trees, shrubs, perennials all need less tilling than annuals and most vegetables do, and many of them have edible parts
- **Plant densely:** More plants=more carbon storage, less weeding and digging
- **Top with organic stuff:** mulch, compost, dropped leaves (healthy ones) all will decompose and add nutrients to the soil as water and critters pull them down
- **Use your muscles!:** Prune, mow, and rake by hand rather than with gas
(Info summarized from [Horticulture](#) magazine)

Upcoming events and more

Jul 10 : Garden Club Potluck! Email for location

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: “Aquilegia” derives from the Latin “aquila” (eagle), a reference to the talon-shaped petals; “chrysantha” means “golden”.

Plant miscellanea: In plants like columbines, the petals form long pointed “spurs” which produce nectar at their ends. This is easy for long-tongued insects like moths and butterflies to access, but hard for bees (unless they are very small!)

Things to do in July

General

- ✓ Adjust irrigation timers
- ✓ Keep bird baths clean
- ✓ Replenish mulch
- ✓ Decide which areas get too much shade or need more

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Plant chervil, cilantro, fennel in beds to attract beneficials
- ✓ Dump any standing water to foil mosquitos

Edibles

- ✓ Pick vegetables regularly, water, mulch, check for pests
- ✓ Don't let citrus or avocados dry out
- ✓ Plant corn, cucumber, squash
- ✓ Cover rows of new seeds with 4" burlap strips, wet each morning, remove after seeds sprout

Ornamentals

- ✓ Save columbine and lunaria seed
- ✓ **Clean up bromeliads and fertilize; separate pups and pot up**
- ✓ Plant marigolds, zinnias
- ✓ Start biennials from seed: foxgloves, campanula, sweet William
- ✓ Deadhead perennials
- ✓ Water young drought-tolerant plants to get them established
- ✓ Fertilize roses, ferns

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://socialwatersmart.com/index.php/>

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